THE CHICAGO LEDGER

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LOVE'S MAGIC MIRROR.

Within a dear, old-fashioned room,
All flooded with a rosy bloom,
In the fire's gleeful blaze and glow.
We watch the visions come and go—
The Christmas scenes of olden years
Bright with a mist of tender tears,
The fun and frolic of our girls and boys,
The Christmas tree, the scattered toys.

Our happy boys, we see them now!
Grave Jamie, with his thoughtful brow,
And Will and George, all full of glee,
As handsome lads as one might see.
And Edith with her glowing face,
And shining eyes and witching grace,
And, oh, the little girl who died,
Our youngest lass, our fondest pride!

And now we wait the Christmas-tide—
Though they are scattered far and wide
And cannot fill the old home place,
We see in dreams each well loved face.
And looking in each other's eyes
Time on fleet wings backward flies,
And though we two are gray and old
Sweet love transforms the gray to gold.

So by the magic of love's skill
We two are fair and youthful still,
And in the mirror Cupid brings—
Glad memory of flowery springs—
We see ourselves all young and gay
As on our far-off wedding day.
And thus we two, once groom and bride,
With young hearts wait the Christmas-tide.

A Loveless Bridal;

Or, THE PLOT AGAINST MARCELLA

By Captain Douglas Lyon

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CHAPTER XVII.

A HUNT THAT FAILED.

DOCTOR JUDAS was alone in his inner office when the bell rang violently.

Dropping the bit of work he had on hand, he hurried to the door and opened it to behold Mrs. Stanley's maid on the steps.

"Madam!" said the girl, thrusting into his hands the sealed letter which she carried.

The little man broke the seal and at a glance mastered the contents of the sheet.

"I'll come," said he, and the girl vanished.

A peculiar smile illuminated the doctor's face when he returned to his inner room.

"Urgent?" said he. "Madam must be in a stew. I'll see."

A minute later he was on the street and hurrying to Lovelit place.

He was greeted by Mrs. Stanley with a little cry. Her face was white.

"Ah, if you had been a little sooner!" she exclaimed at sight of the doctor. "I've had a visitor, a dangerous one, too."

"How dangerous?"

"A man who demanded to see the will."

"Gilbert Montclare?"

"Jasper Chipps."

Doctor Judas appeared to fall into a train of thought.

"You remember, the man whose name is signed to the paper," resumed the woman.

"Ah! He wanted to see the paper? Was it to tell me this that I have been summoned here?"

"No. Marcella is gone."

At this the doctor shrugged his shoulders.

"Gone, is she? A runaway bride? This would make a good romance for the papers."

"But it means something."

"We'll discuss that later on," said Doctor Judas. "You say the man wanted to see the paper?"

"Yes."

"Well? Of course he didn't get the chance."

"He played a trick on me. I was taken unawares and thrown half-conscious into my chair. After that I scarcely knew what passed."

"He found the will, then?"

"Yes. He would have torn the whole house upside down but what he would have succeeded."

"I thought you kept it under lock and key?" frowned Doctor Judas.

"I did but what are bolts and bars to a man like Jasper Chipps? He would have taken my life if he had not discovered the paper."

"Did he take it with him?"

"I have been so unnerved since he went away that I haven't had the courage to look."

"Look, then."

There were signs of trouble in the doctor's eyes.

Mrs. Stanley took her keys and unlocked a certain drawer in the table before her. Her look became a stare of utter blankness.

"It's gone, eh?" ejaculated the doctor.

"He took it sure enough."

For a moment Doctor Judas said nothing.

"The man knew what he wanted," he said at last. "This man Chipps must be apprehended."

"Yes, yes, and made to disgorge?"

"No, killed!" coolly said Doctor Judas. "Now, tell me about Marcella."

This Mrs. Stanley did in a few words, whereat the little doctor picked up his hat.

"Leave everything to me and keep your head," he said ere he departed.

"If you don't find Chipps and recover the paper——"

"I never fail," was thrown back over the disappearing shoulders. "I have no balks on my ledger."

With this the woman of Lovelit place was once more alone.

Doctor Judas took the first cab within sight.

"The old bird may have returned to the old nest," he said to himself as he settled back in the cab. "It's worth while looking there."

The cab, after tracing numerous streets, drew up at a curb in a narrow thoroughfare which the doctor looked at and nodded complaisantly as he opened the door.

"He lived here when he was in Donald Steele's employ," he said to himself as he approached the house.

His knock brought a middle-aged woman to the door.

"I want to see your old lodger," he said, pushing past her. "He's come back, I understand."

"Mr. Chipps? Yes, sir; you'll find him in his old room. He would have no other. First room to the right upstairs."

Doctor Judas nodded and bounded up the steps.

He did not rap at the designated portal but turned the knob and walked right in.

A light was burning in the room and enabled him to see the man who occupied a chair at the table in the middle of the floor.

"Hello!" said Jasper Chipps, looking up at his visitor.

"Good night, Mr. Chipps," returned the suave doctor. "You're back, I see."

"Back in the old nest and I fill it pretty well, don't you think?"

To this cheeriness Doctor Judas vouchsafed no reply, but all the time he was approaching the man at the table with the strides of a wild beast.

"Chipps," he said in low tones, "you played a fine game tonight."

"I?"

"Yes. It was well played, but it won't work."

"Why not?" cried Jasper Chipps drawing back and looking into the face above his own.

"I want the paper you took from Mrs. Stanley."

A little smile gathered at the corners of Chipps' mouth. His eyes seemed to get a new light.

"Are you her agent?" he asked.

"I am her friend."

"Oh! Well, I'm sorry, my dear doctor, but you can't have the document."

"It doesn't belong to you."

At this Jasper rose from the chair, his broad shoulders looking quite Atlantean in the light.

"It's a forgery, doctor," he said.

"Sir?"

"It's not the will I signed, not the same thing at all."

"But it has been probated——"

"And by some hocus pocus has fallen into the hands of Leo Stanley, eh?"

"She was keeping it."

"Certainly. It was the proper place for a forged document. I'll attend to it hereafter, doctor."

"You mean that you will not surrender it?"

"That's just what Chipps means," was the reply. "I never wrote my name at the foot of such an infamous paper."

Doctor Judas, balked but not discouraged, drew back the length of a stride.

"I have come for the paper," said he, watching Jasper narrowly. "I shall not depart without it."

"You won't, eh?" Chipps laughed. "You mean that you will take the forged thing whether I will or no?"

Before he could reply the figure of Chipps shot across the space that separated them.

"You mean, villainous puff-adder," hissed Chipps in his ear. "You concentrated essence of original sin, I've a mind to choke you to death. Take the infamous document which has been held over Miss Marcella's head as a club by her viperous aunt, will you? It's a game two can play at, doctor. No, you can't use any of your magic tricks on me." Chipps held him at arms' length. "You shall see the chief of police. Want the incriminating paper, do you? Ha, ha! That's mine now, for a spell at least."

The dark face of the little doctor went white as an aspen leaf.

He saw he was no match for Jasper Chipps, and compromise entered his head.

"I want it because my friend, Mrs. Stanley, would destroy it," said he.

"That game won't work," laughed Chipps. "You're piping for the wrong rat, doctor."

"She is much exercised over the taking of the will?"

"I don't doubt it. Come, I'll let you go. I don't want to bother with you just now."

With this he dragged his prisoner across the room and opened the door.

"Carry the news of your failure to the woman in Lovelit place," he exclaimed, and the next moment the little dark-faced doctor was falling down the stair, to land in a heap on the lower landing.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RAMON DOUBTS.

"I'm about at the end of the tether. In the first place, I'm at the mercy of Doctor Judas, and secondly Mrs. Stanley refuses to give me a dollar of Marcella's fortune."

Thus spoke Ramon Doan in the seclusion of his lodgings the night after the events we have just recorded.

"Added to all this," he went on, "Marcella herself is missing and the last words she uttered in my presence were words of vengeance. I can see the hand of my old enemy, Montclare, in this. Why not turn and strike at him first? Then take care of the doctor, that imp of wickedness, and make one bold play for the high stakes?"

He seemed to start at the boldness of his own words.

Five minutes later he was on the street.

It was not yet midnight and the clubs were in full blast. He made his way to the "Crescent" and entered. He passed from room to room as if in search of some one.

In one room he caught sight of Doctor Judas in conversation with a foreign-looking personage, but he gave the pair but a glance and passed on.

Suddenly a hand was laid on his arm and he whirled to come face to face with the curse of his existence, the little doctor.

"Come into the private room," said the doctor to Ramon, and the young man, glaring at him, followed without a word.

When they had seated themselves the oily doctor looking him over for a second, said coolly:

"You don't look encouraged, my dear Ramon?"

Ramon ground his teeth but did not speak.

"I think I have a clew to Marcella," continued the arch plotter.

Ramon raised his head and caught the speaker's eye.

"Where is my wife?"

"Wait a moment. Don't devour yourself with impatience. She's not gone with a handsomer man."

"I care not for that," almost hissed Ramon. "Where is Marcella?"

"Where she can be ransomed for a goodly sum."

"Ransomed? You don't intimate that she's been kidnaped? Why, she ran off."

"That's undisputed. But there are dangers in the streets of this town after dark. See here."

Doctor Judas drew from an inner pocket a bit of torn newspaper, which he handed to Ramon.

Ramon looked over the "Personal" that seemed to invite observation and read as follows:

"If those interested will communicate with 'X. Y. Z.,' this office, they will learn something of the whereabouts of the unwilling bride of a week."

He handed the slip back to the silent doctor.

"That means a ransom," said Doctor Judas.

"And how much, think you, I can pay?" and Ramon rammed his hands disconsolately into his pockets.

"Not much, but this advertisement means Marcella."

"Granted. Go and ransom her, then."

Doctor Judas fell back, and for a moment contemplated Ramon in silence.

"Do you mean to say that you don't care what becomes of your wife?" he asked.

"Why should I care? I won't get to touch a dollar of her wealth."

"But you don't want her to fall a prey to those who have kidnaped her?"

"It matters little to me!" cried Ramon. "I'm at the end of the rope anyhow."

"And you repudiate my demand?"

In an instant Ramon had drawn to the farthest end of the settee and was looking most defiantly at Doctor Judas.

"See here," said he, and the words seemed to come through his very teeth. "I don't believe I killed old Simon."

"You don't, eh?"

"I don't."

"You choked him the last time you saw him?"

"Yes. It was the passion of a moment."

"And then you robbed his strong box, taking the notes he held against you?"

"Monster, fiend, who told you this?"

"There was a witness, young man. You were not altogether unseen."

Ramon leaned toward Doctor Judas, holding his breath in a strange manner.

"Were you the spy?" he asked with a colorless face.

There was no answer, so far as speech was concerned, but the look he received from Doctor Judas was enough.

"Now you want me to help ransom my unwilling bride?" and he laughed in the doctor's face. "You expect a beggar to pay—how much?"

"Without the finding of your wife the game can never be played out," observed the little man.

"The game? By heavens! you've named it properly!" cried Ramon. "I've other business just now than looking for my runaway bride. I came here to find a man."

"Chipps?"

"Who is Chipps?"

"A thorn in our flesh, which I hope to extract ere long," replied the doctor.

"I came here to find Gilbert Montclare, my wife's champion."

"He was in just before I saw you."

Ramon sprang to his feet with a hissed malediction.

"Then he must be here yet," he exclaimed. "I'll find him and then I'll talk to you."

He bolted across the room before Doctor Judas could prevent, and vanished beyond the door.

"They must not meet," cried Doctor Judas, rising. "Not for the ransom of Marcella must those men come together."

He was downstairs in a moment in the large receptionroom of the club, and his eyes wandered piercingly in every direction.

Suddenly he caught sight of a man who had just entered.

"Oh!" cried the little doctor, under his breath. "What brings the head of the Goldhawks here?"

He approached the person whom he had singled out, a man of forty, well-dressed and well-shaved.

"Ah, this is a surprise!" cried the doctor, halting before the newcomer. "You're almost a stranger here."

The other looked at him but did not reply.

"How goes the old business?" continued Doctor Judas. "You have the happy faculty of playing two roles at the same time."

"I, sir?" the voice was cold, and a pair of penetrating eyes were transfixing the doctor.

"Yes, you, captain. I did not know you had the entree to The Crescent."

"No? Permit me to inquire how in the name of goodness they allow you to have the freedom of the club?"

Doctor Judas gave the other a smile, and answered:

"Come. I guess both of us are candidates for the gallows. Isn't this some of your fine work?"

With this he slipped into the stranger's hands the advertisement he had just shown to Ramon.

The dark eyes of the other read the lines in silence and handed the paper back to the doctor.

"How much do you demand?" ventured Doctor Judas.

"We don't deal with gallows birds," was the cutting reply. "We deal only with those who are honest and will pay."

With the last word the speaker turned abruptly on his heel and walked off, leaving Doctor Judas in a trance of pallor and indignation.

"The demon!" he exclaimed. "I now know where Marcella is. She has fallen into the net of the Goldhawks. And their captain is here for a purpose—perhaps to see Ramon."

Stepping back, the irate doctor watched the other one secretly. He saw him move from place to place watching every person carefully for a few moments, and at last turning away disappointedly.

Ramon was not in the room.

"One more chance," said the doctor to himself. "I'll let him know that I am dangerous."

He crossed the floor just as the man was leaving.

"Captain?" said he in low tones.

The addressed person turned and looked Doctor Judas in the eyes.

"Don't carry your game too far. Every diamond has one as sharp as it dare be."

A singular look leaped into the eyes of the stranger.

"Eh?" he said, placing his face almost against the doctor's. "It's a threat, is it? My dear Doctor Judas, don't invite a shower of stones at your glass house. In other words, to be plain, don't force me to tell who killed Simon Goldfish, the old Shylock."

There was no reply.

Doctor Judas merely looked into the face of the speaker and saw him cross the floor, puffing at his fragrant cigar.

In another second the little doctor was walking in an opposite direction, buried in silence impenetrable.

CHAPTER XIX.

RAMON QUITS THE GAME.

The reader must not think for a moment that during these scenes Gilbert Montclare was idle.

With the assistance of Jasper Chipps he was trying to uncover the plot against Marcella, and when he learned that the unwilling bride had fled from the house in Lovelit place he turned his full attention to her.

It was to him that Chipps carried the alleged will which he had taken from Mrs. Stanley, declaring his signature as witness a rank forgery. A great light broke in upon Gilbert.

"We must find Marcella," said Chipps, as Gilbert placed the will back on the former's table.

"That's our duty," was the reply. "She will be sought by the plotters, who will leave no stone unturned to get her back in the black net of doom. So far there's no clew."

"One must be found," cried the eager and impatient Chipps. "Marcella left the house with the intention, no doubt, of burying herself somewhere beyond the watchfulness of the cabal."

Gilbert was silent.

In his abstraction he picked up a newspaper which lay on the table, and a moment later uttered a little cry.

"What's up now?" ejaculated Jasper Chipps.

"Read," and Gilbert thrust the sheet into Chipps' hands, designating with his finger the "Personal" which Doctor Judas had brought to Ramon's notice.

Chipps read slowly, and laying the paper down, scratched his head a moment.

"It's about Marcella," said he. "She's fallen into the hands of some night prowlers who see a gold mine in her. 'X. Y. Z,' eh? How to get on the trail is now the question."

"Yes," answered Gilbert, half-dejectedly. "We seem as far from the quarry as ever."

"The person answering the 'Personal' is to address 'X. Y. Z.' in care of the newspaper. We can do that. It must be done at once, and one must watch the countingroom to see who calls for 'X. Y. Z's.' mail."

"The watch may be endless," said Gilbert.

"It's the only way," persisted Chipps.

Gilbert took writing materials from his desk and set to work. In a few moments he had composed a letter of inquiry, which he sealed and addressed as directed by the "Personal."

Chipps put the letter in his pocket and went out to drop it into the letter box of the countingroom.

Half an hour later Gilbert, disguised, might have been seen shadowing the delivery counter of the office It was a long wait. He was relieved by Chipps, whose turn expired at nightfall when Gilbert again resumed his station.

GREAT Order FULTON by Mail UNEQUALED
Kentucky's Straight Whiskey
Express Prepaid from Distiller to You
2 Gallons for $5. 3 for $7.50 or 1 for $3, choice of Rye, Bourbon or Corn Fulton Straight whiskey highest medicinal thoroughly matured, in Myers patent 1 gallon demijohns. To prove Fulton is best you need
send no money
In a Plain Box
2 Gallons IN DEMIJOHNS $5 Or 4 Full QUARTS $3
We ship on 30 day's credit, if you have your merchant or bank write us guaranteeing account. No C.O.D. Full Quart Bottles of Rye, Bourbon or Corn are expressed prepaid in plain boxes, either 4 for $3., 8 for $6. or 12 for $9. FREE—4 miniature bottles of Selected Fulton with every 2 gallon order, 6 with 3 gallon orders, accompanied by cash. If not satisfied with whiskey return; and, if paid for, all your money will be refunded by first mail.
ADDRESS MYERS & COMPANY, Warehouse No. 172 COVINGTON KY.
SOLE OWNERS U.S. Reg. Dist'y No. 72, 6TH DIST., KY. Orders from Mont., Wyo., Colo., N. Mex. and West thereof, must call for either 20 full quart bottles, 5 gallons in demijohns, or a cask, for $15. by prepaid freight. Write for express terms
Write for our book, A Fair Customer, and price list sealed.

No one, as yet, had called for "X. Y. Z's" mail.

At last a young girl entered the counting-room and ambled half-timidly to the delivery counter. Gilbert paid but little attention to her until he heard her ask if there was any mail for "X. Y. Z." In an instant he was alert.

When the girl left the office she had Gilbert at her heels. Chipps was nowhere to be seen.

The little thing led Montclare a long chase. It was half-way across the city. At times he doubted if he was on the right trail, but notwithstanding this he persevered and kept on.

At last he saw the girl dart into a gloomy street and open a certain door.

He believed he had found Marcella.

As he drew off he formulated half a dozen plans which he rejected one by one and at last withdrew.

Going back to his lodgings, he found Chipps asleep in a chair. In an instant Jasper was awake and looking strangely into his face.

"Come, I've tracked the quarry down," said Montclare.

"What, found Marcella?"

"I believe so," and Gilbert told the story of his adventure.

"It's a rotten place," said Chipps. "I know it of old. There's no darker spot in the city than Tinhorn boulevard."

"We must not halt because of the character of the battleground," smiled Gilbert.

"A thousand times no!" cried Chipps. "I did not intimate that I was for backing out. Come, Gilbert. It's Marcella or death!"

The two friends went away together.

Meantime, in the house in Lovelit place Mrs. Leo Stanley was facing Ramon with a white face.

"You must find the man who took the will," she was saying. "If he makes use of it, all is lost. You lose a wife and the little game is forever off."

"I care little," cried Ramon, thinking of his last interview with Doctor Judas.

"Find the will—get it out of the hands of Jasper Chipps and your wife can be found, and with her will come the million for which we have played."

Ramon placed his hand on his throat.

"And what will you do to silence the lips of the infamous doctor?" he asked. "Am I to be blackmailed by such a wretch as he?"

"What is his secret if he has one?"

"He accuses me of the most heinous of crimes. He deliberately says I killed Simon Goldfish, the old usurer!"

Mrs. Stanley looked at Ramon, but did not speak.

"I choked the old money shark," went on Ramon. "I don't deny that, but I did not kill him. Some one must have come after me."

"What proof have you that some one came after you?"

"Unfortunately, none," almost moaned Ramon.

"Then, you see, the hold Doctor Judas has on you," mercilessly commented Madam.

Ramon would have replied, but at that moment the door swung open and the figure of Doctor Judas was seen on the threshold. Ramon uttered a cry and recoiled.

"Ho!" laughed the little doctor, half-demoniacally. "This is an unexpected pleasure."

He advanced and coolly seated himself in a chair.

"What news of our fair runaway?" he asked.

"I have none," answered Mrs. Stanley. "Ramon, here, is also in the dark."

"It seems to me that a husband should look after his bride," and the serpent eyes of Doctor Judas sought Ramon, whose face was strangely white.

Ramon seemed to choke with indignation.

"I've been more fortunate than both of you," said the man of mystery. "I can lay my hands on Marcella."

"Then do so!" cried the woman. "Without her we've lost the game."

"Evidently so," coincided the doctor. "Yes, I am quite sure I can find Marcella. But you know one cannot hunt for nothing."

"We are mutually interested in the finding of Marcella," Mrs. Stanley exclaimed.

Doctor Judas nodded, and Ramon inclined his ear.

"Marcella, or Mrs. Doan," he went on, "is worth a million. If you two, being interested parties, will sign a paper giving me, say, one-half of Marcella's fortune, I will agree to deliver her in excellent health in this house."

Mrs. Stanley, with an effort, kept her head, though she bestowed upon the little man a look which would have killed, had it been a barbed shaft.

"Give him all," hissed Ramon, flashing his eyes upon Doctor Judas. "Give the leech the last drop of the golden blood!"

Doctor Judas slowly turned his eyes upon Ramon and transfixed him with his dangerous gaze.

"I would advise slowness of speech," said he. "There is the Goldfish matter——"

The sentence was never finished, for with a cry and a bound Ramon flung himself across the room and alighted upon the figure in the cushioned chair.

Not a word was spoken.

Mrs. Stanley fell back horrified, her face blanched to double whiteness and her tongue deprived of all power of utterance.

In terrified silence she witnessed the short struggle of the two men and did not draw a new breath till Ramon sprang back with a wild oath of victory.

Doctor Judas lay limp and unconscious in the chair.

"You've killed him!" cried Mrs. Stanley as she clutched Ramon's arm.

"And who had a better right, Madam?" flashed Ramon, gazing down upon his work. "The rest of the game is yours now. I did not kill Simon Goldfish and that man knows it."

He said no more but walked coolly to the half-open door.

"But your wife—Marcella?"

"My wife in name only! With the will in the hands of Jasper Chipps, who is the ally of Gilbert Montclare, the whole scheme dissolves."

"But you're not going to leave me to fight them all?"

"Yes, you and that fiend yonder," and covering Doctor Judas with quivering finger for a moment, he sprang across the threshold and was gone.

Mrs. Stanley hurried to Doctor Judas' side. One look was enough.

The little man was dead!

CHAPTER XX.
A SMILING CUPID.

The mistress of the mansion in Lovelit place recoiled from the lifeless form in the chair, speechless and white.

It seemed as if she stood before the open doors of doom. For a moment she gazed about the room and then struck the call-bell a sharp blow.

The maid, Isis, appeared.

"Bring me my jewel box," she commanded. "Fetch me the little red cedar box from my dresser."

The questioning face of the maid disappeared.

"Leave me to myself," said Mrs. Stanley when her commands had been obeyed.

She was alone once more.

Ten minutes later a woman let herself out of the house. The solitary occupant of the parlor was still there.

Ten squares from the scene this same woman almost collided with a man, at sight of whom she fell back with a little ejaculation of fear.

The man so unexpectedly confronted was the irrepressible Chipps.

"Madam——" began Jasper, but Mrs. Stanley waved him aside and quickened her pace.

"I've got news for Madam," said Chipps. "We've found Marcella."

Found Marcella? The words sank like a ball of molten lead to the depths of the woman's bosom.

She pulled herself together and hurried on.

At any moment she expected to feel the heavy hand of Chipps upon her shoulder.

Surely there were footsteps behind her.

"Madam——"

It was the same voice, the same tones which had just rang in her ears.

Mrs. Stanley's hand clutched something which was concealed in the folds of her dress.

"Why not?" she said under her breath.

This man had torn away the mask of duplicity and deception; he had taken away the forged will; he would unravel the guilt of the cabal and the whole infamous plot against Marcella would, through him, be brought to light.

Yes, why not?

Mrs. Stanley bided her time. Just ahead a tree shaded the pavement, and her eyes hailed the shade as a deliverer.

When she reached the spot she halted and turned. The man was almost upon her.

Suddenly, with an energy born of dark despair, Leo Stanley's hand leaped from its hiding place. Her eyes at the same time flashed fire.

The man on her track saw the movement and stopped, but too late. The woman was upon him like a tigress.

Something that glittered darted into the air. There was a half-spoken cry of vengeance and the hand came down.

The man reeled against a building with a gasp. The fury followed up her blow with the hatred and agility of a Venetian bravo.

Again and again she struck, then, with a cry, flung away the knife and ran.

Chipps picked himself up and gazed after her.

"Worse than a Dyak," he commented. "I was not looking for just such an affair."

There was a long slit in his coat and blood on his sleeve.

The woman was out of sight.

"Where did you get this?" asked a doctor, in whose office Jasper was a few moments later.

"Oh," smiled Chipps with aggravating grimness, "I halted a wildcat."

"I should think so, and her claws nearly found your heart."

When he again found himself on the street he did not attempt to follow Mrs. Stanley.

It would have been useless, for she left no trail behind. Half an hour after the assault a woman entered a pawn-shop and poured out upon the counter a heap of jewels.

"How much?" she asked.

The Jewish face that bent forward became aflame with greed. The man named his price.

"Quick," said Mrs. Stanley. "They're yours." And the following minute she was again out in the city of awful night.

Meantime, in a house far removed from Lovelit place, a young woman reclined in a chair.

Gilbert Montclare, seated not far away, was studying her face with sympathy in his gaze.

"I thank you, Gilbert," said Marcella. "You came in the nick of time, and I am free from the vultures of Tinhorn boulevard. I may be able to repay you some day."

"My reward has already been received," was the reply. "You are out of that net safe and sound."

A faint smile crossed the pale face of Marcella.

"And the man, Chipps? You will tell him to come to me. To him I owe much."

"Chipps will be here by and by," said Gilbert Montclare. "When you go back to Lovelit place it will be as the absolute mistress of the mansion——"

Marcella held up her hand.

"Nay!" cried she. "My unhappiness came to me there. Aunt Stanley can have the house of unpleasant memories."

"Do you think there will be an Aunt Stanley to inhabit it?" asked Gilbert. "The plot has been unraveled. The false will which kept you from your own all this time, the plot of Doctor Judas, Aunt Stanley and the other one——"

"My husband, you mean?" interrupted Marcella. "I have taken an oath of vengeance, but yet he may not have been as black as he is painted in my estimation."

Gilbert Montclare did not reply, but arose and went to the window.

At that moment a man passed the house. With a little start Gilbert recognized him. It was Ramon.

He did not communicate his discovery to Marcella, but quietly left the room. It was like the passing of a vision, for when he gained the street Ramon was out of sight.

The night wore into another day.

The day gave way to night again and a week passed into the great cycle of the past.

One night Gilbert and Jasper stood in the morgue over the body of a man who had been run down by a "Red Flyer." No one knew the poor semblance of mortality that burdened the cold slab of the dead-house.

"It is the end of the game," said Chipps. "It is the man who played for a million and lost."

Gilbert nodded and turned away.

"Shall we tell Marcella?" asked Chipps, when they reached the air. "It was Ramon, Gilbert——"

"She will know all in time. The mills of the gods grind slowly, but all the grist is ground."

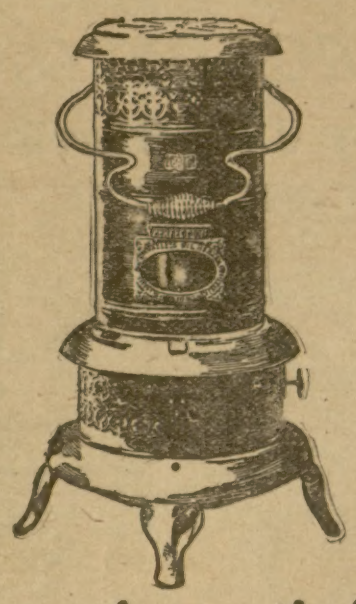
* * * * * * * * * * *

A year had vanished into the past. Nothing had been heard of Aunt Stanley, she never returned. Marcella, for months, had been mistress of the house in Lovelit place.

One night she came down the stair in her bridal robes for the second time, smiling at the roseate future held out to her, and when the words had been spoken that made her the wife of Gilbert Montclare, she upturned her face for the kiss of love which sealed the holy vow of wifehood.

The end.

Little Things Annoy or Please Us



Little things annoy us—the little curl of smoke that, if left alone, would soon smudge the furnishings and make work for the house-wife.

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Notice to Our Readers.

We wish to call the attention of every reader of the Chicago Ledger to the advertisement of Dr. Blosser's Catarrh Remedy, which appears in this issue. Dr. J. W. Blosser, 27 Walton Street, Atlanta, Ga., the discoverer and proprietor, is a man of such character that his claims for the remedy and his promises may be relied upon in every particular.

As he offers absolutely free a trial sample of his Catarrh Remedy, it is certainly well worth the while of every sufferer to write him and give the remedy a trial, at least to this extent. It is evident that unless the remedy was a good one he could not afford to make this offer.

For Results.

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Bub—Nothin' easier. Gimme yer roll, den take yer umbreller an' give yerself a dizzy knock on de coco.

Why She Was Discharged.

"Yes, we got rid of our 'housework' girl," said a dweller in the suburbs. "At least my wife did. I guess it was a case of the last straw with her. The woman made a mistake when she took up service as a 'profession,' she should have become a female 'sea lawyer!'

"On the third day after we had engaged her Mrs. —— called her to the drawing room, where the dust had accumulated like a gray carpet on the baby grand. 'Look, Matilda,' she said, 'I can write my name in the dust on the piano. What does that show? The maid contemplated the hieroglyphics for a moment in very apparent admiration, then burst out with, 'Shure, mum, that shows th' value of iddication.'

"This was almost forgivable, but when the next morning the missus showed her some once-beautiful white porcelain dishes dark with dirt and grease, and asked her what should be done when dishes got as dirty as that, and the maid replied that if she were the missus she would get colored dishes 'cause they would not show the dirt so quickly, it was almost too much.

"The climax, however, arrived about two weeks later, when my wife took her 'treasure' aside and said to her gently but firmly: 'Matilda, you must arrange to have less company. Why you have more callers in a day than I do in a week.'

"Far from nonplussed, the 'jewel' replied: 'Well, mum, maybe if ye'd thry to be a little more agreeable, yez'd have as many friends as mesilf.'

"After this we were afraid of what might come next."

Just the Thing.

Clerks in bookstores are expected to know the inside of every book, and to be able to advise prospective customers much as a doctor prescribes for a patient. A writer relates the following rather one-sided conversation which took place in a hurry.

"I've only a little time," she said to the clerk, "and I want to get my husband a book for his birthday. Show me what you have.

"I don't want anything too expensive, and I don't want anything cheap, either. He's a mild-mannered man and not fond of sports, so don't you show me anything in the way of trashy novels; and I might as well say right off that you can't persuade me to buy history or biography.

"I'm in a deadful hurry, and I've wasted too much time here already. Of course you don't know my husband, but from all I've said can't you suggest something appropriate?"

"Yes, ma'am," said the clerk, humbly, looking along the shelves. "Here's a book called 'How to Manage a Talking Machine.'"

Just Noises.

"Look here!" shouted the irate farmer. "What are you doing fishing in my lake when it's posted?"

"Aw, go on!" sneered the tough city lad. "Make a noise like a hoop and roll away."

The farmer took out his knife and cut off a section of birch.

"Sonny," he said, solemnly, "I reckon yeou'd be better making a noise like a locomotive for the next few minutes."

"Like a locomotive, old cloverseed? Why?"

"Because yeou are going to be switched."

And the next moment the yells that emanated from the clump of bushes made a noise like a Sioux Indian on the warpath.

The Mysterious Cousin;

Or, THE TRAGEDY OF A NIGHT

By J. M. Merrill

[Copyright 1909 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

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CHAPTER XI.

LETTICE LAKE was not as indifferent as she had seemed.

She went up to her room, passing her mother's door with scarcely a glance, her feelings ruffled to their depths. What she had seen in the parlor startled and hurt her deeply.

The girl did not wear her heart on her sleeve, nevertheless she had all she could do to keep back angry, indignant tears.

She went to the bed and sank down with her head pressed against the pillow; there she sat, sobbing for many minutes, her sweet blue eyes suffused with the first tears she had shed since the death of her father and the terrible after explanations of Huddlestone as to the manner of his death. That recital brought tears and sobs, but of far different import than those that were falling now.

She was experiencing hard lines. The petted child of a wealthy old man, dropped to the sphere of a fatherless, perhaps penniless girl, she realized some of the griefs and sorrows that so often fall to the lot of many human lives.

It seemed to her that the one on whom she had the best right to lean had proven a broken reed indeed. Don Huddlestone had been kind, yet she had longed for a strong arm about her shoulders as well as an encouraging word from loving lips; these she had not received; now she knew why.

It was this new California cousin who had wrought a change in the man who had once been so insistent in his lovemaking. The truth burst today upon the girl's brain for the first time.

Florence, whom she had tried to treat with sisterly affection, had turned and stung her. Despite this fact, however, Lettice did not so much blame her cousin. Some girls are coquettish by nature; some men were never constant long. It was of Gregerson she thought, of him and his treason only. What girl could refuse advances from a man like him, apparently noble, and as handsome as a god.

"How could you do it, Volney, how could you?" and then the troubled maiden fell to weeping harder than ever. She was not strong, and this added trouble threatened to make her ill indeed.

Lettice sat smothered in grief till a clatter of hoofs and a cheery voice outside called her attention to other matters. She arose and crept to the window, falling to the carpet on her knees. Across the green trotted Black Bess, her fleet little animal, and on the seat of the little buggy was Florence, quite gay with her flushed cheeks and curling tendrils of black hair fluffed about her pink ears.

The Californian turned and glanced up at Lettice by the window. Instantly she drew rein and called, asking if her cousin would like to go for a ride. Lettice shook her golden head in refusal.

"I won't be gone long," called Florence. "The air is so bracing I felt that a spin would do us both good."

Then away whirled the buggy and girl, disappearing down the road leading to Washtenong, and not very far behind the man who had ridden southward on one of the stable horses.

The last words of gay Miss Iderman cut deeply. "Good for both." What could that mean only that she expected to share her ride with Gregerson?

Lettice bit her lip and brushed aside her tears.

"Let them go if they wish," she said in affected indifference. "I shall never ask him for an explanation—it can't be explained, that is all."

Her sweet young face dropped on the hollow of her arm, masses of golden hair flooded the window sill, and there, for a long half-hour, poor little Lettice snuggled, moaning her heart out over a worthless scoundrel.

Yes, that was what he was, she decided, lifting her head at last with a long, deep sigh. Darkness was coming on apace and Letty struggled to her feet at sound of a voice calling her from the head of the stair—Marie the maid, telling her that the mistress was inquiring after her.

The girl smoothed back her disordered hair and went out to seek the querulous invalid who was a greater trial to patient Lettice than she had ever been before.

"Why do you leave me for so long?" querulously demanded the invalid. "You know I am not strong, and that I am growing weaker every day. I shall soon follow your father, then what will become of you, tell me that?"

"Why worry, mamma, dear?" returned Lettice, giving her parent a gentle kiss on the blue-veined brow. "You are going to live many years yet, and I trust you may eventually recover."

"You know better than that, Letty."

"I hope——"

"I heard wheels. Who has been here?" broke in the mother, unheeding her daughter's words.

"Nobody, mamma. It was Florence driving off with Black Bess."

"What a girl she is," with a deep sigh. "Do you like her, Letty?"

"Why, yes, mamma, of course I do. She is my cousin."

"I suppose so, but she is unlike any Iderman I ever knew. I don't like her ways in the least."

"I am sure——"

"You are sure of nothing where that girl is concerned, Letty," broke in the elder woman with a sniff. "Her big black eyes haunt and annoy me. Does she ever hear from her people? It seems strange——"

"She has frequent letters," said Lettice.

"Have you read any of them?"

"Oh, no, mamma. I would not think of such a thing."

"Well, but I should think she would show them to you."

"She never does."

"Queer, isn't she?"

"I have never thought of her in that way, mamma."

"She has ways of her own, and moves about like a cat," said Mrs. Lake. "I am almost sorry she ever left her California home to come here. She isn't very chummy with you now, is she, Letty?"

"Maybe not. I had not thought that she would be. You see, we are not the least bit alike. She has her ways and I have mine. I am a true Wolverine, while she is as rigid a Californian. She is kind and nice always, and I have no reason to complain."

"Marie tells me that you occupy separate rooms. One would think girl cousins would naturally room together. Florence can't be very friendly in my way of thinking."

"It is better that way," declared Lettice. "You see, Cousin Flo is a mountain girl; she enjoys outdoor life, and she comes and goes to suit her own sweet will. Sometimes she doesn't come in till midnight——"

"The idea!" gasped Mrs. Lake.

"Oh, it is nothing to be surprised over," protested Lettice. "I let her do as she pleases. It was because of her California wild ranch ways that she thought it best to occupy a separate room."

"And has she done this right from the start, Letty?"

"Right from the start, mamma."

"Queerest notions out," mused the widow frowning.

It was long past midnight ere the girl talked about returned to Pine Tree Hill on this night in question. Lettice heard her come as she crept softly up the stairs to her room across the hall from her own. Evidently the belated girl did not wish to arouse any one of the sleeping household. Lettice had not slept well, consequently was aroused by her cousin's soft tread along the hall.

It was late the next morning, while Lettice was at her toilet, that a low rap sounded on her door. Florence entered at sound of the gentle "Come in" from her cousin. Lettice stood before the long pier glass combing her rich masses of golden hair. She was dressed ready for the day, yet stood long at the glass, combing and brushing the golden flood of sunshine which had always given the lumberman's daughter the palm of beauty on the Basshawk.

Lettice carefully noticed the tall Miss Iderman as she came in and stood in a somewhat awkward attitude.

"Cousin Letty, are you angry with me?"

"Why do you think I am?"

The speaker continued to comb her hair without a glance at her visitor.

"Oh, because. Well, you know, of course."

Lettice made no effort at reply. She was now coiling her fine hair in a regal knot at the back of her slender white neck.

"There was nothing wrong in what you saw yesterday in the parlor, Letty."

Lettice pursued her work without as much as glancing a second time toward her cousin. Florence bit her lip and frowned. She was plainly annoyed at the behavior of Miss Lake.

"I have come here to explain," she said again. "Now, don't be ugly, Cousin Letty. I shall never forgive you if you refuse to listen."

"I am listening, Miss Iderman."

The cold iciness of Lettice's voice chilled the other.

"I see," exclaimed Florence, drawing away, "that you are unforgiving. I will go away and leave you till you feel better."

Lettice could bear no more. She turned facing the tall dark girl, her gentle young face aglow with passion.

"I have loved and trusted you from the moment of your arrival, Florence Iderman," began Lettice at a white heat of wrath. "You came professing the utmost friendliness; I met you in like manner. I did not know that I was nursing a viper which was to sting me to the death. Florence Iderman, have you no sense of the proprieties to come to me asking forgiveness after what you have done? I would rather not talk further."

Although understanding that she was dismissed Miss Iderman refused to accept the hint. She stood back, folding her arms, a peculiar, not quite pleasant smile curling her full lips.

"Since you refuse me an explanation I will tell you something, my proud Miss Independence," said Florence, with a keen articulation. "Other girls have hearts as well as yourself, yet you have had no care as to how you might wound them; it is only of yourself you have been thinking."

Lettice turned and lifted a surprised gaze to her cousin's face.

"That's right. Look your innocence, Letty Lake, while you go on plotting treason against your own flesh and blood," sneered the slender Californian. "It hurt like a knife when I chanced to win a scrap of attention from this big lover of yours. What think you then it is to me when you deliberately plan to steal my sweetheart?"

"Florence Iderman, what are you talking about?" demanded the indignant Lettice, her cheeks flushing fiery red, then going white.

"Why, about that scene under the maples not a week since, when a very nice gentleman pressed you to his heart and whispered soft nothings into your willing ear. Don't start and get mad, that won't help matters. Saw it? Why of course I did, and I was angry, too, to think I had nursed a viper in the person of my pretty, baby-faced Michigan cousin."

CHAPTER XII.

Gregerson went forward with a degree of caution. He was not sure of what he should find. He saw the glimmer of the firefly light at intervals through the undergrowth.

Finally it dropped from sight in the twinkling of an eye. Gregerson was puzzled. He paused and drew a deep breath as if to reconsider his course of procedure. The ground descended suddenly into a well-defined gully. There was along this a tangle of vines and short bushes not easy to walk among. Far down the gulch came another glint of the firefly.

"I presume I am several kinds of a fool," muttered the young man, but now that I have entered upon this adventure I mean to see its conclusion." With hurried steps, crashing through the heavy "shintangle," the land-cruiser made his way into the depths of a great, ever widening gulch.

He paused and leaned against a tree. Just ahead the firefly dipped into view, then dropped into the side of the hill. Gregerson went forward, halting suddenly before a rude cabin built half its bigness into the hill.

The trailer caught a faint glimmer through the cracks between the log ribs of the hut. He at once glued his eye to this and had a fair view of the inside. A man was bending over something on the floor. His back being toward him, Volney did not at first recognize the prowler.

The fellow was examining something on the floor at his feet. He had placed his firefly lantern on a shelf and busied himself with opening a bundle, which soon resolved itself into a suit of clothes. These the man carefully unrolled and spread out for his inspection. The coat he lifted and laid carefully across the pine table which seemed about the only article of furniture the cabin contained. The man smoothed this out carefully.

"Good enough!" he exclaimed, and then laid the coat carefully aside while he proceeded to examine the trousers and waistcoat.

After a little he rolled the suit again into a compact bundle and tied them with a string he produced from his pocket.

"This suit of clothing will yet hang some one," said the man aloud.

The spying land-cruiser heard it all, saw all, and waited anxiously to catch a view of the night-prowler's face.

From up the gully another form was moving in the direction taken by the two men. This form glided with the ease of a snake through the tangle and crouched at length within a few feet of the man peering through a crack into the shanty.

It seemed to Gregerson an age ere his man within the cabin turned about. When he did so, the land-cruiser uttered a low ejaculation. It was the darkly-handsome face of Don Huddlestone that met his gaze.

Although Gregerson came near revealing himself by his outcry, he was not as greatly taken aback as his emotion would seem to imply. In truth he was but more fully confirmed in a suspicion that had long held possession of his brain, a suspicion amounting now to conviction that Don Huddlestone was the assassin of Gideon Lake.

To confront the attorney and accuse him of the crime was his first thought, the next a desire to wait further developments.

"It will never do to be found here," thought Gregerson.

He turned half-round to retrace his steps when something tall and cat-like sprang upon him. There came a sharp metallic sound, followed by a brief struggle. The cowardly assailant of the land-cruiser hugged his victim closely for one instant then eased him to the damp earth.

"There! you at least won't tell tales out of school," gutturally growled the assassin.

At this moment a rude door twanged and the tall form of Huddlestone was outlined against the sky. He stepped briskly forward, just in time to see a form, indefinable in shape, dart up the gully.

"Hold on there!" cried the attorney springing forward in pursuit. He passed only a few feet when he staggered, falling over the prostrate body of a man—Gregerson, lying apparently dead on the ground.

Huddlestone had his wits about him, and quickly regaining his feet, ran swiftly up the gully in pursuit of the murderer. He soon gained the upper level, where he paused and tried to penetrate the darkness with his gaze. He saw nothing other than the gaunt boles of forest oaks, the down-drooping foliage and general blackness of night.

"The villain has escaped," he muttered disappointedly. "I was not quick enough to intercept him."

As he was turning to retrace his steps the distant whir of wheels on the gravelly road met his ear. Some one was driving toward Washtenong at a late hour it seemed. Huddlestone made no attempt to look for the traveler but retraced his steps into the gully. Of a sudden his steps were held and a low cry sprang to his lips. A great red light filled his vision.

The sharp, spiteful crackle of dry, burning wood met his ear.

"My God, the hut is burning!"

With this outcry the young attorney tore down the gulch at a rapid run. He gained the immediate vicinity of the place to note that it was too late to re-enter the hut. And there, with ghastly upturned face, lay the dead land-cruiser, not ten feet distant from the side of the burning house.

It was but the work of moments for Huddlestone to spring to the prostrate man, lift him from the ground and bear him away from the immediate vicinity of the fire.

Huddlestone had very many things to regret. He had lost that bundle of clothes in the fire and a mysterious assassin lurked somewhere in the woods. This villain might pounce upon him at any moment. The attorney bent over Gregerson and made a swift examination. He found no wound, and moreover made the joyful discovery that the land-cruiser was not dead.

Some time later Volney Gregerson opened his eyes to strange surroundings. He lay on a bed in an unfamiliar room. What had happened? It all seemed like a dream to him. The white walls, shaded windows and air of sickroom silence oppressed him. He made an effort to sit up. His doing so sent a sharp pain down his spine, ricocheting back through his head and arms. He caught his senses with a gasp and fell back to the pillow, faint as death.

The door swung slowly on its hinges and a strange woman's face peered in. Seeing the patient awake she crossed the floor and stood at the bedside.

"You are better," she said with a reassuring smile.

"Maybe I am," he returned with a ghastly attempt at a smile. "Where the deuce am I anyhow?"

"At Doctor Cambrage's private hospital."

"In Washtenong?"

"Oh, no. The doctor has an office at Washtenong, but his hospital is here in Gardenfield. You will please not talk. The doctor will be here presently."

With this the woman left him.

Gregerson studied on the situation, half-puzzled, till his brain began to work freely, when the events of a night came back with stunning force.

"I see it all now," he muttered. "Some one jumped at me like a tiger—nearly killed me with a blow. Was it Don Huddlestone? He caught me spying and attempted to put me aside forever. I'll live to see you behind prison walls, Donald."

And then the sick man closed his eyes and dropped into profound sleep. Some time later, when he was again awake, old Doctor Cambrage came in. He greeted his patient with a benignant smile.

"You are going to make a live of it after all, my boy," chuckled the old man. "One time I had my doubts."

"How long since, Doc?" queried Gregerson.

"The day he fetched you here, my boy. You was a pretty bad subject for life insurance that day."

"That day. Why, how long have I been here, Doc?"

"It'll be ten days this noon."

"Ten days!"

The old physician laughed at the amazed expression on his patient's countenance.

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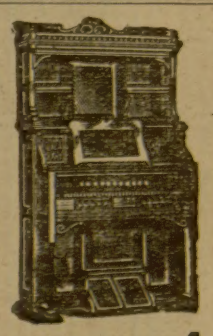

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Gregerson lay in meditative silence for some time. Doctor Cambrage busied himself about the room at minor details, moving the medical potions on the little stand.

"Ten days!" finally uttered the sick man. "This will never do. I must get out and go to Pine Tree Hill. Who knows what may take place during my long absence? Does Minwaring know?"

"Of your mishap, well I should say not. Not a soul up there knows what has become of you. I am keeping the secret for the sake of finding the scamp who tried to murder you."

"Well, and what has it amounted to?"

"Nothing as yet. We hoped for some enlightenment when you were able to talk," said the old doctor.

"I can tell you very little," said the sick man.

"You were in a strange place—that is, it seems so to me, in the big gully ten miles up the Basshawk wagon trail. Can you explain that?"

"Easily, Doctor Cambrage. I was tracking a mysterious personage."

"Tracking him, eh, and in the woods on a dark night? Rather a queer time for that it seems to me," and the doctor lifted his brows.

"To me, too. I was following a dark-lantern, Doc."

"Yes?" said the doctor.

"I tracked a man into the gully and to a small hut in the hillside. His business there I do not know, but it was for no good, I am sure."

"Why are you so sure?"

"Because he seemed to wish to hide everything from the world. He had a suit of clothes—blood-stained garments I imagine—which he wished to destroy. I believe it was in that gully the assassin of Gideon Lake hid on that fatal spring night, and there he secreted the evidence of his crime. Once I am able to travel I shall investigate the inside of that hut."

"You can't very well do that," and the doctor laughed.

"And why not, pray?" demanded Gregerson.

"Simply because of the fact that the cabin was burned to the ground on the night you were assaulted."

"Then I know why it was done—to destroy all evidence of the crime against Gideon Lake. Ah, things look limpid at last. I believe I can put my hand on the guilty scoundrel, Doctor."

"Well, let's hear his name, my boy."

"It is Donald Huddlestone. He killed old Gideon, and attempted to send me the same way when he found me close after him——"

A slight creaking sound cut short the sick man's outburst. A man entered and faced the speaker—Don Huddlestone himself!

CHAPTER XIII.

"It isn't true," indignantly denied Lettice, in reply to the accusation of her cousin Florence. "I never, never in the world did such a thing as you say I did!"

The blue eyes of pretty Lettice shone with a blaze that betokened an aroused heart. She held her brush aloft, not deigning to give her coils of golden hair a last tender pat.

"Oh, but I saw it with my own eyes, so what's the use of your denying it, my innocent little lamb!" and the laugh that followed was most annoying. "You had Volney, and that ought to have been enough. You are an artful little deceiver, that's what you are, and I don't blame Volney one mite for being mad about your carryings on."

The haughty head of Miss Iderman was tossed jeeringly, while her eyes flamed defiance. This was their first quarrel and Letty felt very much worked up over it.

"Why, Florence," she began, but her cousin stormed across the floor, in a manner that frightened her.

"I wouldn't blame Mr. Gregerson if he threw you over entirely," she blazed forth in a torrent of invective. "He knows all about how you have deceived him."

"I don't know what you mean, Florence Iderman," said Lettice, drawing away from her angry relative.

"As innocent as a dove!" sneered Florence.

"Please go away and leave me alone," urged the younger girl, her delicate sensibilities too deeply ruffled for her to speak calmly.

"I want to know one thing first, Letty."

"What is that?"

"Why do you deny allowing Mr. Huddlestone to make love to you in the maple grove?"

"Why, Florence, I never did any such thing!"

"Oh, yes, you did," persisted the Californian. "I saw you holding hands, and he kissed you. Mr. Gregerson——"

"Oh!" with a little cringing cry. "And did you tell him—Volney—that?"

"If I did what have you got to say, Miss Innocence?"

Lettice turned and laid her head against the wall. She stood thus, sobbing softly. Florence stood regarding her with a sneering smile for a long minute, then the sneer fell from her lip and a softening light entered her sloe black eyes. There was pity in them for the troubled Letty. She went to her cousin and laid a gentle, caressing hand on her shining golden hair.

"I am so sorry," she whispered softly in the pink little ear. "I did not think you would take it so to heart, and I had to do something to offset your accusations against me. I didn't mean to say that Don is my truly own sweetheart, because that wouldn't be quite true. He doesn't stand in that light just yet."

"D-Don?" gasped little Lety.

"Why, yes. I was referring to him.'

"But I—he—you see——"

"No need to explain, dear. No man could be with you long, cousin mine, without losing discretion and his heart. Don is excusable for kissing you." The lips of the speaker were very close to that reddened cheek, and with the last word Florence imprinted a very affectionate kiss on the wet cheek. "Am I forgiven, Letty?"

"Oh, but you know, he never did, Florence."

"Who never did what, Letty?"

"He—Don—never kissed me. I would never——"

"There, there, it's none of my business if

"I have a warrant for ye."

did, Letty," cheered Florence with the cooing sympathy of a young mother for her grieved baby. "Let it drop now, and we'll be friends again."

Lettice struggled away from her fair cousin's encircling arm. She stood up very straight, and as tall as her abbreviated inches would permit, her red-lipped mouth quivering with feeling.

"But I tell you he never did, Florence," protested the girl with heightened color and burning eyes. "I would let no man kiss me——"

"Only Volney, Letty," and Florence laughed at her pretty cousin's distress. "Well, we won't say any more about it if you will forgive me for that little scene last night in the parlor?"

But Lettice was not quite ready to condone that. She closed her lips tightly lest words she should afterward regret come forth.

"I see you are not quite reconciled," went on Florence, "and I am not going to ask you again to forgive me. Men are always simpletons where we women are concerned. Let me tell you Volney has no great liking for me—that is, not in the way you imagine; but, knowing of Mr. Huddlestone's very marked attention to his sweetheart, he is naturally put out about it."

"Please leave me, Florence."

A dangerous light flashed in Miss Iderman's black eyes.

"You unforgiving little wretch!" she suddenly hissed across her gleaming white teeth. "I don't care whether you forgive me or not. I tell you right now I shall win this big land-cruiser if I can. Furthermore, I know you are fibbing when you deny that Don Huddlestone kissed you in the maple grove. My eyes were not deceived. Don is clever; he has got the inside track now, and you, Letty Lake, shall never marry Volney Gregerson."

With this parting shot Florence turned and quitted the room.

Lettice braced up with a pitiful little sigh. She dried her tears and stood regarding her indignant self in the long glass.

"What right has Flo to talk to me so—so awfully mean?" cried the heiress of Pine Hill, her whole heart athrob with intense feeling. "She tells awful lies; and—and he will believe 'em!" For a minute the tears threatened to again start. Lettice repressed them with a heave of her gentle breast, a shrug of her sloping shoulders, at the same time biting her lip to keep back words which she knew were dreadful to utter. Our gentle little Letty was not quite an angel as the reader has before now discovered.

"Of course," went on the girl, discoursing to herself, "I have met Mr. Huddlestone a good many times; all in friendliness, though, he is my legal adviser and has a right to come and talk over affairs pertaining to papa's property. I don't see why Volney can't be good enough to see it in that light. He might if I explained to him, but he doesn't give me a chance to tell him anything any more."

Finishing her toilet the girl went below. She did not meet her cousin again that day. The two were rather distantly friendly for a fortnight after that unsatisfactory interview in Lettice's room.

Both Don and Volney absented themselves for many days, a fact that the inmates of Pine Hill could not quite understand.

Old Timothy was in evidence, however, and he said some things to Lettice that troubled her not a little. There was a chance the old man assured her of everything going to satisfy the creditors of the dead lumberman, of whom he was one of the heaviest.

The girl begged Timothy to hold his hand for a time at least. It was for her mother that Lettice grieved; as for herself, she was strong enough to make her own way in the world. The latter thought was quite apart from anything connected with Volney Gregerson. The estrangement between them seemed to deepen, and in a measure her cousin Florence was to blame. And yet Lettice could not quite hold him guiltless. He ought never to permit another woman to take her place so soon after their first meeting—nor ever for that matter.

Then there was Don. What a noble man he was, doing everything in his power to save the estate of her late father from utter wreck.

Karl Minwaring came in one day, looking troubled and restless. He sat down, throwing one heavy limb over the other and regarded Lettice very solemnly, almost severely. The girl winced under his searching eyes.

"Where's Gregerson?" he asked.

His voice sounded like the roar of an angry bull.

"I am sure I do not know," was the girl's quick return.

"Nor do you care I suppose."

"Why, Mr. Minwaring, what do you mean?"

"Just what I say of course," growled the superintendent. "You don't give a rap for my young friend since that dirty snake of a Huddlestone's been coming to Pine Tree Hill. You'll have something to answer for, my lady, mark what I tell you."

The ponderous limbs dropped apart, and huge Karl leaned heavily toward the daughter of his dead employer. Lettice felt a distinct shock. Minwaring was dreadfully put out about something, and she had not the remotest idea what it was. She waited for him to explain. His fling at the younger Huddlestone affected her little.

"Volney rode away almost a week ago, just after he called here to see you. He was terribly worked up, and went away madder than a hornet. Of course you know what it was about."

"Certainly I do not," protested the girl.

"That is all very fine," sneered the heavy lips of Minwaring. "Girls nowadays have no respect for the proprieties, nor for the feelings of men. There was never a finer fellow than Gregerson. In throwing him over for a cur like Don Huddlestone you have made yourself ridiculous."

"But, sir," protested Lettice, "you have no right to talk like that to me. I will not listen." The girl rose angrily to her feet.

"Sit down, silly, and hear what I have to say," broke forth the old man, stamping his big heel. "I know what I am talking about. Volney left here one night in a huff. He agreed to return on the following day but has not. What I don't like about it is that the horse he rode came back in the early morning of the next day with broken bridle and empty saddle. The boy may have met with a serious accident you know."

The girl sank weakly down once more. Her face went white at her caller's bare suggestion of an accident to Gregerson.

"But that was a week ago," she cried quickly. "You must have heard from him since then. Has—has he been hurt?"

The light in the speaker's blue eyes was a tremulous one. A grim throb of satisfaction came to burly Karl just then. He was a keen reader of human nature and he thought he detected signs of more than passing interest in both voice and mien of the girl before him.

"Suppose an accident has happened," he mumbled; "even suppose my boy has been killed, what matters it to you, Miss Lake?"

She sat stunned at his words. Volney dead! There came a ringing as of a cataract in her ears; she reached out blindly, as if striving to clutch an arm for support. Her exhibition satisfied him that "his boy" was still a living issue with the heiress of the Lake estate. He smiled grimly, saying, "Don't borrow trouble, my child. So far as I know our boy is alive and well. The horse came home as I stated; we have searched for his rider without satisfactory results. I came here hoping you might be able to tell something. Has he written?"

"No," faintly.

"Then there may have been trouble. When was Don Huddlestone here last?"

Burly Karl was on his feet now, moving to depart.

"He stopped a minute in passing yesterday," faltered Lettice.

"So! Well, he comes here pretty often I notice. Don't trust him, my child, don't trust him."

"But, sir, he has been very kind," began Lettice, her soul wrought up to a high pitch of excitement at the news brought by Minwaring.

"Kind!" with a toss of his huge head. "Some kinds of kindness is poison, Letty, deadly, damning poison! There are men who can smile like a saint while thrusting the assassin's dagger to the heart of a friend. This immaculate Donald Huddlestone is one of this sort, dearie. Avoid him as you would a devil from the bottomless pit!"

With that Karl Minwaring pushed open the door and passed outside.

CHAPTER XIV.

Gregerson was convalescent at last.

For two weeks he had languished on a bed of sickness, which at one time threatened the extinction of his mortal existence. When he was able to talk he made inquiries all about himself, to be told that he was found insensible in the woods and brought in a buckboard to Gardenfield and to Dr. Cambrage's private hospital.

This much the doctor had permitted the nurse to tell. Nobody outside of the immediate hospital, however, knew the identity of the man who had been thrown so unexpectedly upon their care.

"It's nobody business anyhow," declared the old doctor, rubbing his wrinkled hands together softly. "There's a lot of skulduggery going on and it is well enough to keep dark till some of it can be exposed.

One day Gregerson sat by the window of his room smoking a pipe. He was desperately lonely, and would have welcomed the sight of anybody, even an enemy, of whom he had more than one judging from the way he had been treated. A carriage rounded up to the building and a man alighted. Gregerson's face flushed and he withdrew his pipe with a scowl.

Don Huddlestone was coming to enter the building. Surely he would not dare to pretend friendship after what had happened.

Volney remembered the scene in the gully and believed that to Huddlestone he owed his present condition. He had no distinct recollection of how he had met with his mishap. Doubtless Don had an accomplice who had caught a spy in the act of watching the movements of the lawyer and had

(Continued on page seven.)

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Is there a Santa Claus? Ask the man with the bundles.

Do not use the denatured Christmas spirit. Get the real thing.

Here's where the children turn the hose on old Santa Claus.

Few of us would care to receive a Christmas box from a pugilist.

Homeliness in a girl indicates that she is a great help to her mother.

An expensive Christmas present is known by its failure to materialize.

It isn't the present but the spirit in which it is given that really counts.

It is well to remember that the poor cannot subsist on one meal a year.

When the girl gets too big to get a doll for Christmas you have lost your baby.

If your children have too much for Christmas, there are children who won't.

Every time a chronic kicker stubs his toe he imagines the world is against him.

That notion that Santa Claus remembers only good children is about to receive a jar.

Most women are satisfied with the presents they get—until they see what their neighbors got.

When it comes to handing out Christmas gifts, people seldom do as they would be done by.

No person of delicacy will borrow a coffee sack to hang up in place of his stocking and fool Santa.

There is no escaping the Christmas rush now. Dive in, though there is no assurance that the water is fine.

When Edgar Allan Poe wrote his wonderful story about the maelstrom, a purely imaginative bit of fiction—for he had never seen a maelstrom, there being none to see—he took the best material there was at hand to illustrate the irresistible force of a strong current. Had he lived late enough to see the Christmas shopper, a purely modern institution, he might have written a more wonderful story. The bargain-counter rush at Christmas time is irresistible. Many a man with a few hours set apart for his Christmas shopping has gone into one of the stores expecting to purchase a book, a music rack, a Teddy bear, a jackknife and three pounds of candy and has been wafted along with the crowd until he found himself where he was glad to buy a safety match-safe, a pair of boxing gloves and a sofa pillow before making his escape. What else is a man to do? There are no straps on which to hang as the crowd surges by, so all he can do is to go with the crowd, stopping where it stops, buying what is closest at hand and being prepared to move on with the avalanche. Without having at hand a moving picture of the maelstrom we should say that the Christmas shopping crowd had it beaten to a frazzle.

In African Jungles;

Or, A Girl's Fight for Honor

By Colonel Alfred B. Tozer.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

A MASSING OF FORCES.

"IF WE wait long enough," observed Bement, "we shall have plenty of help in routing out the people who have taken possession of the crater. And the ones who are coming all have the diamond fever, too. There are Kalkenbrenner, Morris, and Kilrain in one party, all urged forward by Morris' enthusiasm."

"And father out in the jungle somewhere, headed this way," said Clellie Norman.

While this talk was in progress, Florence Wilson stood by Bement with a white, scared face, her eyes fixed on the rim of the crater, where the forms of armed natives could now be seen. Presently she clutched the young man by the arm and said, speaking so that the others might not hear:

"I am afraid for father," she said. "He is lying there wounded, protected by only one man. There is undoubtedly a white man at the head of this new party, and white men, mad with the diamond craze, are worse than savages."

"What have you to suggest?" asked Bement.

"If we can get away from the others," replied the girl, "we might be able to get into the crater, unobserved, and get father out."

"A good suggestion, so far as going in," replied Bement, "only we can never get your father out, in his present condition. Still, we can enter by the passage, and, if possible, lead the others in and finally obtain full possession."

"Hasten, then," urged Florence.

Bement talked for a long time with Bamali, who did not appear to be willing to adopt the plan proposed by the young man.

"Our force is not large enough to attack the men in there," he said. "Besides, the natives we see on the rim belong to a fighting tribe from the desert, and our carriers and trackers will not stand up before them. We can only wait until the others come up."

"And in the meantime," urged Bement, "Mr. Wilson will be murdered and the diamonds will be removed. I have a notion that there is only one diamond pipe in there, the one near which you found the big gem. At least, the pipe I want to search is close to the spot where you picked up that good one. If the present possessors of the crater get into that, we may as well go back and leave them in peace."

"I don't know what you mean," said Bamali.

"What I mean," replied Bement, "is that there are no diamonds in this district except in exceptionally deep pipes. The earth crust above the internal volcanic fires is too thick. We know that at least one pipe has blown to the bottom, and that is all. Except in that one spot, I don't believe there is a diamond within a thousand miles of us, that is, a diamond within reach."

"I have that same idea."

"Then we may as well cut out a long siege and get in there on the quiet, search the pipe we have in mind, and get out again, all without bloodshed. We may even be able to get Mr. Wilson out."

"Very well," replied Bamali. "We'll take the risk."

Bement went to Florence to inform her of the plan decided upon, but found her very much occupied, not at all interested, for the moment, in what he said about getting the diamonds.

Hardly two hundred yards away, slowly ascending the sloping side of the knoll, was Ginger, with the most diminutive man imaginable on his neck. The elephant, a very large and fierce-looking beast, resisted no longer, but advanced on a run toward his mistress, who stood with both hands extended to greet him. It seemed to Bement that the girl would be crushed when the beast came to her, he was so eager, and so clumsy, and so ponderous.

He said as much to Florence, but she only laughed at him.

"Dear old Ginger!" she cried. "He wouldn't injure me to save his own life. He has protected me a thousand times in the jungle and in the African villages. No wild beast will come near him. The savages believe him to be a sacred animal. You see, he has been taught so many tricks that the natives believe him to be possessed of superhuman intelligence."

Bement was not so sure of the prudence of the elephant as Florence was, and stepped aside as the big fellow came up. Florence merely held out her hands to him.

Ginger lifted her tenderly with his long trunk, swung her gracefully back and forth for an instant, and then landed her on his back. This proceeding was followed by a series of trumpetings which awoke echoes in the hills.

Florence tapped the big fellow gently on the head and asked to be put down, and in a second she stood by Bement again.

"You must have had Ginger a long time," said the young man.

"Why," was the reply. "I first knew him in the zoo at Lincoln Park."

"So the old fellow knows Chicago, too?"

"Yes, indeed, and New York. I used to take him candy in those days. Then he became ill and there was talk of killing him. That was in New York. Father had had something to do with capturing him, and so we managed to get him released so as to send him back to his old home to die."

"I have heard of such things being done."

"Then the—the trouble in Chicago came on, and we decided to come back here, and here we found Ginger. I have a notion that he would have come back to me when the natives fled, even if Demon hadn't taken charge of him."

"Who is Demon?" asked Bement.

"Father says he is half-man and half-devil," was the reply. "That is why they call him Demon. He came to us out of the jungle when we first came in this time, and he and Ginger became great friends."

"You might have sent Ginger after me when you wanted to capture me," smiled Bement.

"Why, I didn't want to capture you," replied the girl. "I wanted to warn you that the officers were coming in after you, that is all. I didn't want an innocent man to be taken all the way back to Chicago and thrown into jail."

"Why don't you put my mind at rest on this subject?" asked Bement. "You must know how anxious I am. If I am innocent, as you know me to be, why can't you speak out and show me how to prove it?"

"The time has not yet come," was the reply.

Bement stood for a moment in sullen silence, then Susan and Clellie came forward.

"Is this a conspiracy?" they demanded.

"I'm afraid so," replied Bement. "A conspiracy to keep me in the dark regarding a most important thing."

Florence regarded him reproachfully.

"What are we going to do?" asked Susan. "Are we to camp here, and wait for the others to come up?"

"We are to camp here," was the reply, "and Bamali and I, led by Miss Wilson, are going out to reconnoiter."

"We ought not to permit you to leave our sight again," said Susan. "You almost got away from us last night."

"Oh, but I'll take good care of him," laughed Florence, "and Bamali is quite good at keeping track of people."

"You'll have to leave Ginger here with us as security," said Clellie, with a smile. "I think I could bring myself to steal that gentleman away from you."

"He is a gentleman," said Florence.

So camp was made there, the natives building huts of the "wait-a-bit" thorns which were plentiful, and which are dreaded by all wild animals. The bomas from which the hunters watch for big game are constructed of these thorn bushes, and are as safe as if made of steel.

Ginger was left in the care of Demon, who seemed delighted at the idea of having complete charge of the big beast for a time. He was a lithe little fellow, and when he went to sleep, a few moments later, he was lying on the elephant's neck, as secure from a fall as if in a bed.

The girls were both tired, and as soon as the two men and Florence moved toward the passage through the rim of the crater they sought their beds. Clellie, however, did not rest well. She arose and strained her eyes, following the course taken by the departing friends.

Then she moved out on the path they had taken, walked some distance, and turned back. She had heard some mention of a passage through the wall, and was wondering if Florence was leading the way to it. She was certain that her father was alive, and that he was entitled to the riches of the diamond mines within the crater, if any there were.

She thought it unfair that he should lose everything for which he had toiled so long, and that these strangers should reap the harvest he had sown. She believed that he had originally discovered diamonds there, and that he should be the one to develop the mines.

She had no fear that Bement, and Bamali—her father's trusty servant—would try to deprive her father of his rights there, but she believed that the correct course to protect the mines was not being taken. She believed that they ought to rush into the crater in force and drive the others out before the Kalkenbrenner party approached. The arrival of this party, with Morris and Wm. G. Kilrain, would necessitate some sort of a compromise between the hostile parties. This compromise might rob her

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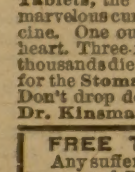

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father of more than half his fortune, for she considered the diamonds his own.

The girl had long been a favorite with her father's carriers and trackers. Indeed, after his strange disappearance, Bamali could not have retained them except for her popularity. She could speak the native language, the dialect used by this tribe, quite well, and she now went to the head man of the party.

The result of the conference was that in a very short time Saarchz and fifty armed, muscular carriers and trackers were on their way down the canyon which led to the passage through the wall of the crater. Half a dozen natives were left to guard Susan, who was sound asleep at the hour of departure. Demon slept on Ginger's neck a few feet away from where the girl lay.

The party advanced as rapidly as possible, and at the mouth of the passage was not far behind Bement, Bamali and the girl. There they paused to send a spy out, but before the man could return they heard a scream of terror, a young girl's cry for help, and Bamali came leaping out of the passage, half-carrying Bement in his arms.

CHAPTER XIX.

SOMETHING OF A SURPRISE.

Bement gazed at the armed natives brought by Clellie in astonishment. His wound was in the shoulder, and he had already lost considerable blood, so the girl made no explanation as he came up to her, but set herself to dressing the wound.

The natives formed in a solid line across the passage, the rocks sheltering them from attacks from above. Those inside were still shooting, but no damage was being done.

In a moment Bamali came running back to the place where Clellie was acting as surgeon. He was swinging his arms wildly, and was evidently greatly excited.

"They have taken Miss Florence!" he cried. "Until a moment ago I thought her safe in some of the crevices of the passage, but she is nowhere to be found. We must go in and rescue her at any cost."

"If there is a white man connected with the party in there," said Bement, "he will see that no harm comes to her."

Clellie arose from the side of the young man.

"I'm going in there," she said.

"It may mean death," said Bamali.

The girl advanced to one of the carriers she had brought with her and talked for some time in the native tongue. Then she turned to Bement, still lying on the stone floor of the passage.

"I am sending word to the intruders in there," she said, "asking permission to join Florence in her captivity."

"It seems to me to be an unwise thing to do."

"You shall not go," said Bamali.

Clellie drew herself up to her full height.

"Who is there to stop me?" she demanded.

"I am here, and these men will obey me."

He pointed to the natives as he spoke.

"Ask them," said the girl, "whether they will follow you or me."

Bamali turned to the natives and said a few words. Then he stepped back.

"They will obey you," he said, humbly.

Bement arose to a sitting position and faced the girl.

"Why are you going in?" he asked. "You have some reason for the course you have mapped out?"

"Certainly."

"May I know what it is?"

Clellie hesitated for a moment.

"I fear to put my hope into words," she said, then, "but still it is a hope. If you care to go in with me, I presume permission can be obtained for both of us."

"In his weakened condition," said Bamali, "it would be suicide."

The girl did not wait to argue the matter further. She passed out to the front rank of her followers and addressed one in a different language from any which Bement had ever heard.

The fellow bowed and turned away as Clellie ceased speaking. Then she took a white handkerchief from her pocket, tied it to a stick and handed it to him. With this sign of peace in his hand he passed on toward the crater.

"Be sure," Clellie said, as he came to an angle in the walls, "and ask for the white man in charge of the party."

"I think," said Bement, arising and standing by her side, "that you have more sense than the whole lot of us. If you had not come up with your carriers as you did, the savage tribesmen in there would have followed us out and murdered us before we reached the camp, and it is more than probable that they would have attacked the camp. In that case the carriers would have fled, being taken by surprise, and you girls would have perished."

"I am sure," said the girl, "that the white man in charge of the party, whoever he is, would have restrained them."

"That would have been impossible," said Bement. "In fact, there was no white man in sight when we were attacked. Even if there is one in there, the mischief would have been done before he could have interfered."

"You may be right," said the girl. "But here comes our messenger. What do you say, Mr. Bement? Are we warned to keep out, or are we invited in?"

"Warned to keep out," said the young man.

But that was not the way of it. The carrier was accompanied by a savage from the inside. He bowed low to the girl and spoke in fair English:

"The master waits for you."

Clellie started to advance, Bement close to her side, but the native obstructed his progress.

Then Clellie motioned the fellow aside and the two passed in together.

"That is the last we shall ever see of them," mused Bamali, "and I may as well get the fellows ready for a battle and for the return trip—if we win."

But the next moment the savage returned and beckoned to Bamali. Wondering what was taking place in the crater, what had become of Florence, and if the wounded man was still alive, the native stepped forward and was escorted to the end of the passage which opened on the crater. There an unexpected sight met his eyes.

The two girls stood side by side, and just back of them appeared the short, stocky figure, the bulldog jaw, the suspicious eyes of M. K. Norman, Clellie's father!

In a second Bement saw through it all. It did not require the long verbal explanation which followed, before many hours, to inform him that on the night of his disappearance Norman had played a trick on his camp.

In order to get on ahead of the party coming in, in order that he might not be delayed a minute by the slow-moving carriers, he had planned a swift dash to the crater in company with savages he had sent for earlier in the day.

A long delay occasioned by a battle with another tribe had brought the party in only after the arrival of Bement and Bamali, with Norman's own party.

The greeting between Norman and Bement and Bamali was a warm one, for the two latter had believed the former dead. Only the daughter had insisted that her father was still alive.

"I don't see how things could come out better," said Norman, as he took the others by the hand. "We are here first, and have the force to hold the crater against an army. Your father," he added, turning to Florence, "is improving wonderfully, and we have reached a compromise concerning what may be found here."

"But Kalkenbrenner, Morris and Kilrain are coming in," said the girl. "What shall be said to them?"

"Why," smiled Norman, "what is usually said to men who come too late to share a rich find? We are sorry for them, but we can't help them!"

"Well, if they can't get in here to take the diamonds," said Clellie, "they surely can't get in here to carry Mr. Bement back to Chicago."

"There is little danger of that," said Norman. "I've been talking with Mr. Wilson concerning the dead man my natives found in the cup, and I have an idea that Bement will never be put on trial for the crime with which he is charged."

"Tell me what you know," said the young man, eagerly. "Everybody seems to know all about the robbery of the Cosmos Trust Company but me, the accused one."

"Never you mind," said Norman. "You wait until the right man talks. Anyway, you didn't say which robbery you referred to."

"Which robbery!" repeated Bement. "Were there two robberies?"

"I think," said Norman, with a smile, "that we'll have to let the president of the Cosmos Trust Company in here when he knocks for admittance. That is, we'll let the party in if they'll admit that the diamond claim is mine."

"And Mr. Bement's," said Clellie.

"Why Mr. Bement's?"

"Because he came in here first," was the reply.

During this conversation Florence had hastened away to the cave where her father had been left at dawn. He was still there, much improved in appearance. He could now talk a little. The guard sat at his side, fondling the leopard kittens which Florence had admired the night before.

Bement was not slow in following the girl. On arriving at her side he found her busy over a map of the crater, with dotted lines showing the way in.

"The stolen plans and maps?" he asked.

The girl blushed and nodded.

"A duplicate," she said, "of the map and plan of march stolen from father. It was found in the pocket of the dead man, Mr. Theodore Kilrain. I think the truth is that Kilrain connived with the thief, who sold a copy also to Mr. Morris. So, while Morris and father were accusing each other of stealing the plans, the real thief made a good thing out of the complication and escaped."

"That clears the point up, all right," said Norman, who had just entered the cave. "Now, when Bement gets his matter straightened out, we'll be a happy family. That is," he added, "if Miss Wilson will explain how she was able to keep safe in the jungle in a white gown. I never saw anything like that!"

"You wait until you see the elephant she rode," laughed Bement, "and you'll not wonder that no one troubled her!"

"Well," said Norman, "we may as well call all the carriers in and send some of the trackers out after game. We may have to stand a siege in here until we get the diamonds out. Kalkenbrenner and Morris will be in before long. And the president of the Cosmos Trust Company may not see fit to believe all we say concerning the death of his brother."

"I am sure that Kalkenbrenner will not contest the possession of the mines," said Bement, "and I fail to see where Morris has any claim, as against a man who discovered them. However, there is no knowing what a diamond-mad man will do, even to his friends, so we may as well prepare for a siege, as Mr. Norman says."

"And while the watching and standing-off is going on," said Norman, "we will see if we can find in the earth here anything that is worth all the trouble we have been to."

Bement and Bamali looked at each other understandingly, but neither said what was on his lips.

The continuation of this thrilling story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

A Needed Reform.

Good Minister (during Sunday service)—My dear brethren, I have noticed that on rainy Sundays the congregation always rushes out pellmell the instant the benediction is pronounced. This looks very unseemly, and I have instructed the sexton to stand in the vestibule on rainy Sundays hereafter and give checks for the umbrellas.

The Mysterious Cousin.

(Continued from page five.)

stricken him down with murderous intent. There was something puzzling about the whole affair, however. Dr. Cambrage had all along refused to enlighten his patient on this point, assuring him that in good time he should know all about it.

"Hasn't old Karl been down?" queried Gregerson one day.

"Oh, yes, but we told him nothing," chuckled the doctor.

"And what does the old fellow think?"

"That you have become disgusted with the whole business and pulled out. There may be a love affair—rather a lover's quarrel back of it all, and so Minwaring isn't borrowing any big load of trouble."

"And you let him think this?"

"Sure. Why not?"

The old doctor's eyes snapped mischievously. Gregerson reflected. There had been something of a lover's quarrel he admitted to himself. Aloud he said: "Minwaring is a fool in some things."

Dr. Cambrage went out chuckling.

Gregerson laid his pipe on the window as the door opened admitting Lawyer Huddlestone. His dark face was as dangerously handsome as ever, and in his deep-set black eyes there beamed an inscrutable light. He came toward the invalid with extended hand. There was nothing to be gained by grumpiness so Volney pretended to be pleased at his visit.

"I am glad you are going to get out once more," said Don.

"Thanks, so am I."

"You have had a terrible siege of it, Volney."

"You might call it that."

Huddlestone crossed his thin legs and seemed troubled.

"You don't ask after affairs up north. Aren't you interested?"

"The doctor keeps me posted."

"Very kind in him I am sure, but I am direct from the seat of war," and Huddlestone laughed grimly. "The folks up there have become anxious about you, let me tell you."

"You flatter me," said Gregerson, who wondered if anybody in the wide world did care very much what his fate might be. This tall, dark, secretive man before him was pretending a friendliness that was not his at heart. Volney believed he wished him dead that he might marry Lettice and hold the lands and houses of the Lake property. As for Lettice there came, when he thought of the golden-haired girl, a bitter feeling not pleasant to his mental taste. Then, too, shooting up like a wraith in the dark, smiled the intense dark face of Florence Iderman. Her deep, soulful eyes held an hypnotic fascination that had not lost its power even after three weeks of suffering. Perhaps she had asked after him; he would like very much to know. The attorney seemed to read his thoughts for he said:

"Nobody has worried more than Miss Iderman, Volney."

"You are kidding now, Don," uttered Volney, trying to scowl down the look of pleased satisfaction that would force itself into his pallid face.

"Honest as gospel, my boy. She has been everywhere searching for you. She suspects foul play, and the girl is actually growing thin from her intense feeling on the subject. I met her only yesterday, and she was ready to cry when she plaintively asked if I thought you were dead. I had all I could do to keep from telling her the truth."

A warm glow filled the heart of the lawyer's listener. Don's words were as manna in the wilderness for his starved soul. He even forgot Lettice for the time. Gregerson turned to glance outside, his face flushing perceptibly. Huddlestone smiled deeply.

"You see, I was telling the truth, Volney," he said.

The invalid fingered his pipe without remark. The keen eyes of the visitor read much in that face which would have escaped the perception of an ordinary man.

"I have come to you today, however, to tell you a few things which I am convinced you ought to know," proceeded the young attorney with a sudden gravity of countenance. "With all her beauty and attractiveness, the cousin of Miss Lake is one to be shunned. I trust you understand that I am

(Continued on page ten.)

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Fill out the following coupon today, enclosing 20 cents in stamps or silver to help the cost of packing and postage. I will send you a sample can free, enough to make 24 full pint bottles. I will also tell you just how to make it. Your money back if you are not satisfied.

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This entitles you to a free trial can of Braumeister Beer Extract, enough to make 24 pints, also free instructions how to make it. Simply fill out your name and address on blank lines below, mail to Henning Wennersten, Brewmaster, 127 Wennersten Block, Chicago, Ill., enclosing 20 cents in stamps or silver to help cost of packing and postage. Your money back if not satisfied.

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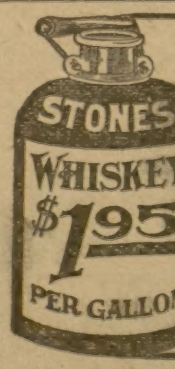

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A Little Cold.

He caught a little cold—
That was all.
So the neighbors sadly said,
As they gathered round his bed,
When they heard that he was dead.

He caught a little cold—
That was all. (Puck.)

Neglect of a cough or cold often leads to serious trouble. To break up a cold in twenty-four hours and cure any cough that is curable, mix two ounces of Glycerine, a half ounce of Virgin Oil of Pine Compound pure and eight ounces of pure Whisky. Take a teaspoonful every four hours. You can buy these at any good drug store and easily mix them in a large bottle.

Wherein They Differ.

Little Willie—Say, pa, what is the difference between a farmer and an agriculturalist?

Pa—A farmer, my son, makes his money on a farm and spends it in the city; an agriculturist makes his money in the city and spends it on a farm.

12 FULL QUART BOTTLES

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It is hereby announced that the Pure Food Distilling Co., Dept. 161, of St. Louis, Mo., in order to advertise their Superior Whiskies, will ship 12 Full Quart Bottles Straight Kentucky Whiskey on receipt of $4.75. This is a bona fide offer. Only done to prove quickly to all whiskey users that it pays to deal with them—in preference to any other distillery. Straight Kentucky Whiskey remember. No blend—No Compound—No Mixture. This is practically a year's supply of whiskey for only $4.75 and while to most people, it may seem impossible, nevertheless, they are responsible distillers and do exactly as they say they will. Never before in the history of the Distilling business has an offer to equal this one been made.

A Grave Charge.

First Police Official (anxiously)—I hear that one of our new men has beaten half a dozen inoffensive citizens to death.

Second Police Official (hotly)—If that horrible charge is true, I'll—I'll—hang me if I don't have him transferred to another precinct.

Last Chance for Free Homesteads.

Yes, a few elegant free homesteads can still be had in Mexico, where many Americans are now locating. You do not even have to go to Mexico, but are required to have five acres of fruit trees planted within five years. For information printed in English regarding Mexican homesteads, address The Jantha Plantation Company, Block 527, Pittsburgh, Pa. You can have your trees planted and your land worked on shares, so as to bring you a thousand dollars a year. The health conditions are perfect and the climate grand.

As to Fair Sex.

"Some women," remarked the moralizer, would never forgive a man for lying to save himself."

"And some others," rejoined the demoralizer, "would never forgive him for not lying to save them."

FREE ASTHMA CURE.

D. J. Lane, a chemist, at 115 Lane Bldg., St. Marys, Kansas, manufactures a remedy for Asthma in which he has so much confidence that he sends a $1 bottle by express to anyone who will write for it. His offer is that he is to be paid for it if it cures, and the one taking the treatment is to be the judge.

One Woman's Way.

"Yes," said the doctor. "I once knew a woman who died from worry."

"What did she worry about?" queried the pale patient.

"Why, she just worried because she had nothing to worry her," answered the M. D.

A Fine Kidney Remedy.

Mr. A. S. Hitchcock (clothing dealer), 886 Carrier Building, East Hampton, Conn., says if any reader afflicted with a kidney or bladder trouble will write to him he will direct them to the splendid home remedy he so successfully used. He is glad to do this and does not wish you to send him money.

A Linen Shower.

Helen—The friends of the bride-elect are going to give a linen shower.

Harold—What's a linen shower?

Helen—It's a shower in which the rain comes down in sheets.

J. P.

Those suffering from weakness and lack of vigor should take JUVEX PILLS. One box will tell a story of marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered. Send postpaid only on receipt of this advertisement and $1. Made by its originators, C. I. Hood Co., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, LOWELL, MASS. (2)

Bright.

Eva—He admitted that she looked like she came out of the ark, but said she was the light of his life.

Edna—Gracious! He must have meant that she was an arc light.

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 691, Blairsville, Pa.

Willing to Oblige.

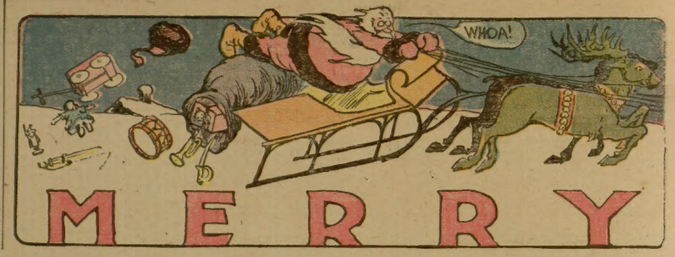
"'Scuse me, ma'am," said the husky hobo, "but ez youse kin see, I ain't hardly got a rag t' me back. Can't youse do sumthin' fer me?"

"Certainly," replied the kind lady. "Here's the rag bag; help yourself."

His Little Game.

Little Willie — Say, pa, what is a broker?

Pa — A broker, my son, is a man who helps others to go broke in order to keep from going broke himself.



SURE TO PLEASE.

If you want to please a woman
There'll be no vain regret
If her birthdays you remember
And her age you will forget.

Time to Reflect.

They wandered through the autumnal forest.

"I just love the leaves," said the bore.

"I don't," spoke up the pretty girl; "there are so many dead ones around, but er—present company always excepted."

And for ten minutes the bore did some tall thinking.

THE DIFFERENCE.

Reason Enough.

Jack—Why is she so crazy about bridge?

Maud—Because she loves to hold hands.

ALREADY COOKED.

"Pap, ain' we gwine t' hab no chicken fo' Chris'mus?"

Pap—Now whad fo' yo' axin' me dat? Doan' yo' know as well as I dat Marse Ben's chicken coop dun burn down wid all his chickens in it.

HABIT'S CHAIN

Certain Habits Unconsciously Formed an Hard to Break.

An ingenious philosopher estimates the the amount of will power necessary to brea a life-long habit would, if it could be trans formed, lift a weight of many tons.

It sometimes requires a higher degree o heroism to break the chains of a pernicious habit than to lead a forlorn hope in a blood battle. A lady writes from an Indian town:

"From my earliest childhood I was lover of coffee. Before I was out of m teens I was a miserable dyspeptic, suffe ing terribly at times with my stomach.

"I was convinced that it was coffee tha was causing the trouble and yet I could no deny myself a cup for breakfast. At th age of 36 I was in very poor health, indee My sister told me I was in danger of becom ing a coffee drunkard.

"But I never could give up drinking coff for breakfast although it kept me constan ly ill, until I tried Postum. I learned t make it properly according to direction and now we can hardly do without Postu for breakfast, and care nothing at all fo coffee.

"I am no longer troubled with dyspepsi do not have spells of suffering with m stomach that used to trouble me so when drank coffee."

"Look in pkgs. for the little book, "The Road to Wellville." "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true and full of humai interest.

Cruel.

He (rejected)—I can never love another.

She—I thought you'd reach your limi some time.

"Your Character."

Elizabeth Towne of Holyoke, Mass., pub lishes the Nautilus magazine, and she als finds time to write and publish a good boo occasionally. Her latest is a birthday guid or character study, covering all of the yea round, and, like all of her productions, it i indeed charming. There is no denying th fact that there is a certain charm about al of Elizabeth Towne's writings, either i book or magazine, that all thoughtful peo ple greatly admire. The title of her lates book is "Your Character," and, for a birth day present alone, is well worth the price 75 cents by mail.

Real Mean.

The elopers were in Montreal and dea old Chicago was many miles away.

"I—I think p-pa is just too mean for any thing," pouted the pretty bride, hiding he sobs.

"What is the trouble, my dear?" aske the wife of the hotelkeeper, consolingly.

"Why, when Edwin and I ran short o funds we sent pa the distress signal, 'C. O D.,' and thought surely he'd send a check Instead of taat he just wired 'J. W. H.'"

"Gracious! And what did that mean?"

"'Just walk home.'"

Candid Confession.

Tramp (peering through kitchen win dow)—Ah, madam, I see you are cookin griddle cakes dis morning.

Crabbed Housewife—Rubber!

Tramp—Ah, madam, der is nothing I lik better dan a candid confession. I though dem griddle cakes looked pretty tough.

No Doubt of It.

Friend—I understand your wife's famil trace their lineage back to William th Conqueror.

Mr. Meek—I guess that's so. Old William was a terrible fighter, wasn't he?

Satisfactory.

Smith—I used to have a great deal of trouble with my teeth, so I finally had them all extracted and an artificial set put in.

Jones—And are they satisfactory?

Smith—You bet they are! Why, I can almost eat with them.

Verbal Strength.

Hazard—Spellbinder must have used some strong language in his speech last night.

Fullerton—Why?

Hazard—The paper says that the crowd hung on his words.

How to Get Rid of Catarrh.

A Simple, Safe, Reliable Way, and It Costs Nothing to Try.

Those who suffer from catarrh know its miseries. There is no need of this suffering. You can get rid of it by a simple, safe, inexpensive, home treatment discovered by Dr. Blosser, who, for over thirty-five years, has been treating catarrh successfully.

His treatment is unlike any other. It is not a spray, douche, salve, cream, or inhaler, but is a more direct and thorough treatment than any of these. It cleans out the head, nose, throat and lungs so that you can again breathe freely and sleep without that stopped-up feeling that all catarrh sufferers have. It heals the diseased mucous membranes and arrests the foul discharge, so that you will not be constantly blowing your nose and spitting, and at the same time it does not poison the system and ruin the stomach, as internal medicines do.

If you want to test this treatment without cost, send your address to Dr. J. W. Blosser, 27 Walton Street, Atlanta, Ga., and he will send you by return mail enough of the medicine to satisfy you that it is all he claims for it as a remedy for catarrh, catarrhal headaches, catarrhal deafness, asthma, bronchitis, colds and all catarrhal complications. He will also send you free an illustrated booklet. Write him immediately.

Honor to Whom Honor Is Due.

Mrs. Jinks—As soon as Cuba is fairly under the control of the United States, our woman's rights society is going to erect a monument in Havana to Queen Isabella. We hold that America owes its discovery to a woman, for had it not been for Isabella, Columbus would not have been furnished with ships and sailors.

Mr. Winks—America owes more to another woman than to Queen Isabella.

Mrs. Jinks—Indeed! What other woman?

Mr. Winks—Old Mrs. Columbus. Had it not been for her there would have been no Christopher.

That Single Thought.

You've heard the old story of sweet wedded bliss, of the two hearts that flutter as one; and the two-souls-single-thought sealed with a kiss, and have wondered, no doubt, how 'twas done. As a wise one who was by experience taught, this effect we will briefly explain; in most of the cases that "one single thought" is "I wish I was single again!"

The Wrong Man.

Bink—Look here, old chap, where is that $10 you borrowed from me last month?

Wink—What $10?

Bink—Why, didn't you come to me and say you must have $10? Didn't you say you were so worried you weren't yourself that night?

Wink—Oh, well, if I wasn't myself, why in the deuce should I be expected to pay it?

Rather Frank.

Count Hickoof—Ze weather is so queer over here. I must get my overcoat out.

The Heiress—How lucky.

Count Hickoof—In what way?

The Heiress—That you haven't lost the ticket.

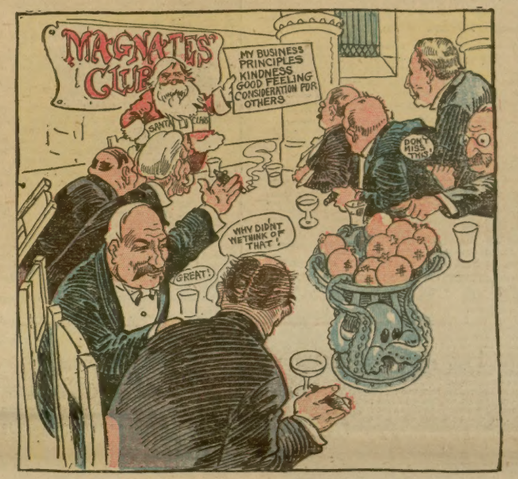
One for Pa.

Ostend—Pa, why does money burn a hole in some men's pockets?

Pa—It must be because it is so hot, my son.

Ostend—The money so hot? And is that why they blow it?

IF THEY COULD SECURE HIM AS A MEMBER.



He might explain how one big business has never clashed with the interstate-commerce, antitrust or other laws and regulations.

WHY THEY FELL.

"The shades of night were falling fast—
But not with Paul Revere;
This happened night before the last—
And all of you should hear.
A stranger came through spoony town
And ere that he got past
The spooners pulled the curtains down—
"The shades were falling fast."

Nothing New to Him.

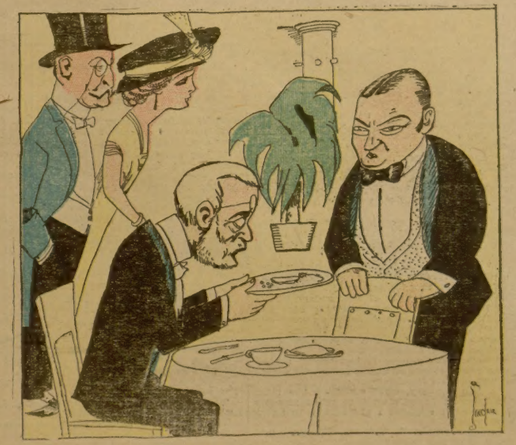
"Dis is de season for nutting parties," remarked the tall tramp as he gazed at the woodlands from the brake beams.

"Oh, dat's me specialty all de year," yawned his companion of the fast freight.

"Doing what?"

"Nuttin'."

HARD TO FIND.



Landlord—How do you find the steak, doctor?

Guest—H'm! By hunting carefully all over my plate!

Appropriated.

Jack—I've seen but two really beautiful women in my life.

May—Yes, sister and I do look a good deal alike.

DURING THE OLEO.

"My hair is like golden butter,"
Said the heroine fair, serene;
Said the villain: "Dey calls her Margy—
But I believe it's Margarine."

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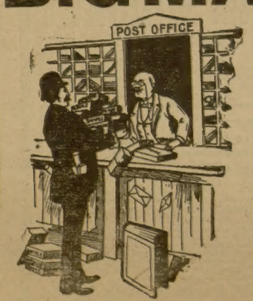

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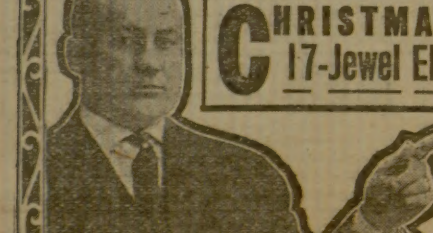

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The Mysterious Cousin.

(Continued from page ten.)

not saying anything derogatory of the young woman's character, only——"

Gregerson whirled, an angry flush suffusing his face.

"If that it what you came for you may as well go at once," cried the land-cruiser in a voice of suppressed feeling.

"Perhaps it may be the proper thing to do, old man," returned the other in an unruffled voice. "I am your friend, Volney Gregerson, and shall risk incurring your wrath in order to safeguard your interests."

"You are a coward to speak ill of a lady."

Volney's white lips compressed; his big but thin shoulders shrugged themselves with a contemptuous scorn that should have penetrated a much thicker hide than Huddlestone's. He sat unmoved as adamant, however, he smiled in fact, and smoothed one knee with his glove.

"I did not expect anything different," he proceeded. "I am seeking the well being of some very dear friends. No, I do not count on you as one of them—at least not now. The time will come when it may be so, however."

"Never!" exclaimed Gregerson.

"As you like, of course," drawled Huddlestone, still undisturbed. "You doubtless know of the trouble Mr. Minwaring is experiencing in settling up the Lake estate."

"I do, and furthermore know that your disreputable uncle is at the foundation of all the trouble. He hopes to swindle the Lakes out of all they possess."

"Aren't you hasty in making this statement?" Huddlestone continued to appear fresh and smiling. "I am sure my uncle is no angel, and yet——"

"And yet he would rob the widow and the fatherless!" snorted Gregerson.

"Not if I can help it, Mr. Gregerson. Cool down a bit and let us talk calmly. I would speak to you of Lettice——"

Gregerson stopped the other with a fierce gesture.

"Say nothing about her to me, Don Huddlestone. I know all you would say, and I do not care to hear it. I will speak one word, however, which you will do well to heed. If you harm a hair of that girl's head, or by word or deed bring her good name in question, I shall take pleasure in shooting you as I would a mad dog!"

The speaker was white to the lips, his big gray eyes flaming with a shuddering and terrible passion. The fountain of his being seemed stirred to the very depths.

For the first time Huddlestone seemed to feel the sting of the other's invective. A bright red spot grew in either cheek, and there came an angry if not dangerous light to the deep-set b ack eyes. Once he lifted a clinched hand and, shutting his teeth hard, seemed ready to spring at his companion.

"It is well for you that you are as you are," finally articulated a smothered voice from across the closed lips of the young attorney. "I am not the one to strike a sick man."

"Oh, as for that, don't hold back," and as this sneering defiance swept from his lips, Volney Gregerson rose to his feet. Thin and sick though he was, his stalwart frame loomed heavy in the sunlight, and his broad breast heaved with savage emotion. The attorney eyed the tall young giant, the red streaks of anger dying out of his dark cheek.

"I'll not quarrel today, Mr. Gregerson," said Don, rising in turn, facing the other with an annoying cynical smile. "You did anger me at first, and I felt ugly. It was my fault perhaps. I came here to tell you something that would interest you much; since, however, you persist in regarding me as your enemy I shall wait till another day for my revelations."

Huddlestone drew on his hat and turned away.

"You coward!" blurted Gregerson, trembling throughout his big frame.

A mocking laugh answered as the door closed behind Huddlestone.

CHAPTER XV.

One forenoon Gregerson came down to the parlor, announcing his determination to seek the up-river country once more.

"You think you are strong enough to resume your duties as a land-cruiser I suppose," said Dr. Cambrage, thoughtfully.

"Yes; but that can wait. I am anxious to settle with some of my enemies; I am quite myself once more. Look at that arm!"

The speaker stood drawn to his six feet of stature and bared his forearm for the doctor's inspection. The good man of pills agreed that his patient was remarkably well along on the road to health once more, but cautioned him against any undue excitement for the present.

"It would please me to have you stop longer with us——"

"Not another day, Doc," declared Gregerson. "I have been off duty too long now. I appreciate what you have done for me and shall try and repay you when I have any favors to give out. I would ask one question before I leave your pleasant sanitorium."

"A dozen if you like, Volney."

"It is about myself. Who brought me to your place? How was I found; what was the nature of my hurt?"

"You were fetched to me by Don Huddlestone, in his runabout, at break of day a month since. He has never fully explained how the accident happened."

"Did he call it an accident?"

"Not exactly. He said he found you insensible with a wound in the back of the head—just a small dint that seemed to depress the life forces. We succeeded in raising the skull, which gave back your life, but you fell into a dangerous fever. You know the rest."

Yes, he knew the rest, or thought he did. After bidding his friends at the Lospital good-by, Gregerson proceeded downtown, his mind occupied with thoughts of the future. It was a bit strange how Huddlestone had acted. That he was his enemy the land-cruiser did not doubt, yet he seemed to have done him a good turn in the present instance. Gregerson went forward, scarcely minding his course, till he heard a low, surprised, happy ejaculation. Instantly he stood at the curb, shaking the hand of a pretty young woman, who had halted her black horse and was regarding him with eyes filled with dancing light.

"Volney!" she gurgled infantilely, her olive cheeks touched with faint streams of color, her deep black eyes fairly devouring him.

He held her hand tightly clasped for some minutes, scarcely daring to speak. His whole nature was thrilled and deluged with tender feeling at sight of this modern Diana. She made a place for him at her side and the twain sped away down the street, the little horse—Lettice's pony—tossing his glossy head proudly as if appreciating the addition to his burden.

"Oh dear, how long it has been," sighed the slender creature at his side. "It seems an age—a full hundred years!"

"A full century, eh?" chuckled the man. "Although I haven't an idea what you are driving at, I suppose I shall have to agree with you."

"I hope you will, Volney. It's your absence that has been so long."

"At that rate I must have grown to be a patriarch." He felt his face with his fingers but found no monstrous white beard to confirm his fears. "I didn't suppose anybody missed me that bad, Florence."

"One body did at any rate. Where have you kept yourself hidden?"

"Honestly, I was unaware that I have been hidden. I think if my friends had cared to find me, they might have done so. I haven't been hidden, and haven't been far away any of the time, simply been boarding at Dr. Cambrage's Hotel des Invalides."

"Have you been ill?"

Her big eyes were searching his face carefully. "I can see you are thinner than I ever knew you to be; you have been ill. I am so sorry."

"So am I," and he laughed heartily.

"Tell me all about it, Volney."

Her little hand lay against his sleeve in caressing tenderness, her soft warm cheek almost touching his in her cooing confidence. He would have pulled himself away but could not. Florence Iderman was indeed the most charming of women; and he, coldly treated by the girl of his choice, very naturally felt a strong self pity that was ready to accept sympathetic treatment from such a source as this.

That ride of twenty miles through the woods, across oak openings, down beneath the dark shadows of hemlock and pine, was one long to be remembered by the young land-cruiser of Basshawk Valley.

"There isn't very much to tell. I met with an accident in the woods that night when I rode madly away from Pine Tree Hill. I was on the point of making a great discovery when some one stole up behind me and dealt a blow that came near being my death. From there I was taken to the hospital. I think that is all."

"How terrible!"

The girl clung to his arm with a sharp, spasmodic clutch.

He yielded himself to the glamours of the situation as most any young fool would have done. He even forgot to talk of the home folks so strongly was he under the fair Californian's hypnotic influence. The light buggy rattled on and on; far behind were left the busy scenes of the town, onward they rode into the fabled elysium of dreams.

"I have been so anxious about you," said the girl, after a time, the spell of sweet communion of souls having been suddenly broken by the meeting and passing of a wagon load of boisterous lumberjacks. "I even asked Mr. Huddlestone to try and find you."

"Well, what did he do?"

"He pretended to search; he rode up and down every road in the whole lumber country; he even had old Tim on the trail, and nothing ever came of it at all."

"He was unable to find me?"

"Yes. He intimated that you had run the country to escape arrest for some swindling game you had practiced in a timber deal. I don't like that young Huddlestone, there's too much secretiveness about him. I couldn't believe that he half tried to find you, Volney."

"It was not necessary; he knew where I was all the time."

"He did?" Astonishment sat plainly upon the face of Miss Iderman.

"Yes," said Gregerson, biting his lip to quell his anger, "he knew where I was; in fact it was he that fetched me to the hospital. I am not much in love with his deceptions, and yet it is possible that he saved my life."

Gregerson was truly puzzled at the many-sidedness of the young attorney.

"Well, did you ever?" ejaculated Florence, deeply stirred. "And here he was pretending all the time that you had run away. He even told my cousin the same story."

"He told Lettice, did he, the rascal?"

"Yes, but she didn't seem to mind it."

"Lettice did not care perhaps?"

A sudden prodding or conscience impaled him. The mention of his sweetheart aroused anew the old fire. He was anxious to learn how she felt over his supposed delinquencies. He asked about her.

"I can't quite make out my cousin," said Florence thoughtfully. "She puzzles me more and more every day, although I see very little of her lately. She was very much put out because I hinted that Don Huddlestone was anything but an honest man. She almost struck me for that, she was that angry."

"Why should she care?" thought Gregerson. He remembered how very solicitous the Washtanong attorney had been with regard to the just settlement of the Lake estate. He had made this a pretext for many useless visits. And Lettice had refused to marry him—Gregerson—till the estate and the mystery surrounding her father's death was wholly revealed and settled. He knew that it was Huddlestone's influence that had alienated Lettice from him, and Gregerson felt bitter in consequence.

"Cousin Letty seems to think he made the world."

"Eh, the world?"

The girl's companion started from his reverie in time to catch her last words without understanding their meaning. Slim Miss Iderman shrank away from the man with a pout and shrug of her full shoulders.

"I beg your pardon, Florence," he cried quickly. "I was dreaming I think. You said something about Mr. Huddlestone's making the world, was not that it?"

She repeated her words. Her companion frowned and remained silent.

"It has all been arranged," at length spoke the girl. "They have taken unfair advantage of your absence and have persuaded the Lakes to settle the affairs of the estate."

"In what manner, Florence?" He turned upon her with sudden interest.

"Well, as near as I can find out, old Timothy is to give up all his claims when Don and Lettice marry. It has been so agreed upon I understood."

She felt the man at her side shrink away as if frightened. He breathed hard and laid a fierce clutch upon the dashboard as though to steady his bodily agitation.

"And they are to marry?" he said hoarsely—"Lettice and that man?"

"It has thus been settled," assured Miss Iderman in a trembling voice.

The twain rode on in silence for a time.

Gregerson had no thought of doubting the news Florence had retailed to him. The trend of events had been toward this very object from the start. It was all over be-

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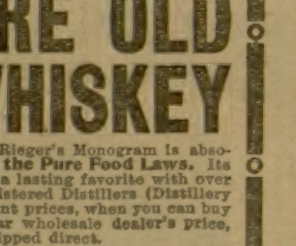

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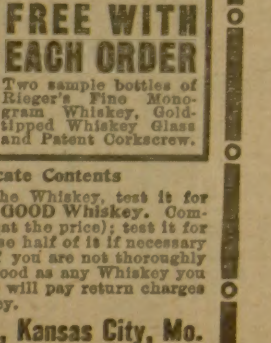

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tween him and Lettice now, and he may as well make the best of it. Suddenly a spasm of pain wracked him. Huddlestone must not wed the daughter of the man he had murdered. Thoughts of the infernal machine, of the death-needle found imbedded in the old lumberman's brain, filled his mind to the exclusion of everything else. He would balk the plans of the scoundrelly lawyer even though Lettice could never again come into his life as she had done in the past. With Huddlestone behind prison bars, his duty performed to the dead, he would turn his back on the river country and seek anotner field for future operations. He had already branched out in the Western field, and had made small purchases of Oregon lands, in that region should be his future striving, and the trouble of the present would doubtless in time be forgotten.

It was an hour past noon when Gregerson was set down at the gate before the Lake mansion. Lettice was on the veranda talking with Timothy Huddlestone as they drove up.

At sight of Florence's passenger, Lettice uttered a glad little cry and ran down the steps to greet him with outstretched hands.

CHAPTER XVI.

Gregerson, surprised beyond measure, stood and held Lettice's two hands tightly clasped in his while he gazed down into a flushed face and a pair of glad blue eyes.

"Oh, I am so glad to see you, Volney!" was her first warm greeting.

All the coldness of the past was swept aside and once more the big land-cruiser found himself in the clasp of pretty Letty's darling personality. It was like a sip of old wine; the heart of the man gladdened and swelled with human feeling. The shadows of the past few weeks were swept into the gulf of oblivion at one swoop of my lady's pretty palm.

"Then you are really glad that I have returned?" said he, his fine features aglow with feeling.

"Oh, yes; for you see, we thought something dreadful had happened you!"

"And if it had, what then?"

He held her fast with his masterful gaze.

"It is good of you to come home," said she, looking aside, ignoring his direct question. "I—that is, we were so surprised and hurt at your doing as you did. Please come in and explain, won't you?"

How could he be angry after that?

"Not to the house," he said as she started to lead him thither. His gaze wandered to the maple grove whose festoons of dark green were now filming with the first gold of autumn. She understood. Out yonder was the double rustic bench on which these twain had sat when he first spoke of his love and asked her to be his wife. It was the renewing of old ties to again seat themselves there, under the wide branches of a lone beech, the silent sentinel of the grove.

The old money-lender sent a keen rather fierce glance at the young couple as they went on their way.

"Perhaps your friend Timothy will not like you to give him the slip like this," suggested Gregerson as they passed beyond the house.

"It is rude, I admit," returned the girl, "but I don't care to listen to him now that you are here."

They sat for a time on the spot made precious to their souls by what had taken place here in the early spring time. Lettice was cheerfully listening to the story of his adventure, her eyes full of curiosity and amaze. The land-cruiser kept nothing from her, lending his own suspicions to the story of the midnight prowler's movements.

"I have set myself to fathom this mystery, Letty," he said in conclusion, "and am sure to have your approval of my acts."

"Yes, you certainly have," she agreed softly. "I shall never feel quite satisfied until the whole truth is known."

"And, Letty, you must see how necessary it is not to trust that man as you have been doing in the past."

"That man, Volney?"

"Donald Huddlestone."

The bright face of the girl fell instantly. A troubled light filled her splendid eyes. Her companion noted all this and grew suddenly grave, almost stern. They had quarreled once over this fellow and Gregerson felt it his duty to put his foot down, where that worthy was concerned. He could not quite understand why his little sweetheart should stand so stoutly by the young attorney. Florence had told him of the fine arrangement made by the elder Huddlestone and Mrs. Lake to save the property intact. Could it be that his Lettice had been in any manner a party to such a scheme?

"You do not like to hear me speak of him, Letty?"

"Not in the way you do."

The girl's face was suddenly upraised to his, a great, unspeakable trouble in the blue eyes, those eyes which to him had been her chiefest attraction. That the mention of Don Huddlestone in derogatory terms should overcast her face and bring that look to her eyes, puzzled and half angered the land-cruiser. Were they destined to quarrel again over a small-minded scoundrel like the Washtanong attorney? If so it should be for the last time. He had no patience with such fickleness and showed a part of his feeling in his face.

"I shall be plain with you, Lettice," he said. "I strictly forbid your holding any further intercourse with Don Huddlestone; you do so at the risk of incurring my everlasting displeasure."

The girl's face went very white. All the gladness of the first greeting went from her eyes; her slender frame quivered, and somehow, she felt very much put out. Her hand, which had been caressing the arm of her companion, was suddenly withdrawn and she moved back to the far end of the rustic bench. A scowl contracted the brows of Gregerson.

"Not that, Volney," and there was a choke in her voice. "You have no right to command me in this, nor for that matter in anything. Even from your own statement Mr. Huddlestone is entitled to your gratitude instead of this distrust. He may have saved your life."

"May have, but not likely," vended the man sourly. "I am convinced that it was a tool of his who tried to murder me. I am also satisfied that he slew your father. After this——"

"Oh, Volney, Volney, what are you saying?"

"I am giving statement to my honest convictions, Lettice Lake. Before you are a week older the beak of the law will take Don Huddlestone in hand. I am determined on no further leniency. If your father——"

"Hush, Volney."

The slender girl came swiftly to her feet, her face like the feathers of ashes, her whole form shaken by terrible emotion.

"There are others investigating beside you, Volney. You shall not slander this honorable citizen because he has befriended me. If we cannot ever again talk together without a quarrel we had better never have met."

His own heart gave a jump at this, and he rose also, clasping the big beech with his arm, enfolding it with a grip of steel. It did seem as though it must soon be all over between them. Did he care so very much? He half persuaded himself that he did not, although the sight of the girl's sweet face, after the long separation, had been very, very comforting to him.

"Do you mean what you just said, Letty?" he articulated after a moment of suffocating silence. There was a dangerous glow in his gray eyes which his companion did not fail to catch. She held fast to her position, however, refusing to flinch at the ordeal.

"I am convinced that we cannot be such good friends as once we were," she said in a low yet forceful tone of voice. "I felt the need of a good true friend when these dreadful troubles of the p st few months came upon mamma and me. I expected—but no matter now. Mr. Huddlestone was very kind; he has been aiding us in ever possible way and I refuse to cast him off at the bidding of anybody in this world. Oh, Volney, please help and not hinder all this."

Her voice fell to a gasping sob; she tottered forward and he caught the slender girl in his arms. There she lay sobbing like a little child on his broad breast; and it was thus that he found them, the man of whom they had been speaking.

"I beg pardon," and the young attorney turned to retreat.

"Oh, Don, Don, come here!"

Lettice drew aside from the enfolding arms of the land-cruiser and sent an appealing glance into the face of the newcomer. It was a strange scene, ripe with startling possibilities. Other eyes had taken it in, and a swift brain was at work to complete the picture.

The man thus appealed to advanced boldly and took the outstretched hand of Lettice. There was nothing cringing or shamefaced in the act. Don turned and faced Lettice's companion. He saw the white anger on the brow of the other and seemed to hesitate.

"You two must be friends."

Lettice tried to lead Don to the other. He held back a trifle haughtily.

"There can be no forced friendship," he said determinedly.

"Such as yours I do not seek," retorted Gregerson, standing back with folded arms. "I am willing to pay your fee for pretending to befriend me, Donald Huddlestone, but I make no truce for the future."

Lettice stood now between the two men, her delicate features twitching with nervous dread for what might happen. She stepped nearer to Gregerson with outstretched hand.

"I insist that you be friends," she said in an unsteady voice. "Mr. Huddlestone has been very kind; his advice has helped wonderfully; I trust——"

"There, dear child," broke in the tall young lawyer, his cheek reddening over her words of praise, "do not make me out an angel. I have striven to do my duty as I see it, and am thankful to know how deeply you appreciate my humble services, Miss Lake. I came today to talk on a subject that cannot but be of interest to you. I did not know," casting a sidelong glance at Gregerson, "that you were engaged. Another time will do as well."

"Stop," commanded the land-cruiser as Huddlestone would have rushed away. "If you have business with Miss Lake transact it now; I will not stand in the way, be sure of that. The speaker turned and walked slowly from the spot. He might have quarreled with Huddlestone. It was not the proper thing to do he assured himself. As he approached the road he saw a vehicle halt just south of the entrance to the grounds. A sudden flush went across the man's face.

"Ha!" he muttered, "I do believe Minwaring is moving at last." With that he hastened his steps to the spot where a rather pompous little man was alighting.

Huddlestone led Lettice to a seat under the big beech tree. He sat beside her, holding fast to her trembling hands.

"He has been a brute, the coward!" were the words, hot and unsteady, that flowed from his lips. "I have tried in every conceivable manner to enlist the friendship of Volney Gregerson. I even saved his life at considerable risk to myself, and what do I get for all my pains—his scorn and unreasoning hatred. Such a man needs to be let severely alone. I am about to strike a sudden, swift blow, after which you shall no longer need protection, my dear child."

He raised her hand to his lips without remonstrance from her. She hid her face against his shoulder and cried softly.

"There, there, dear, he is not worth it."

He lifted her dimpled chin in his big palm and forced her to look into his eyes. There was a queer admixture of humor and pity blended on his face which puzzled her.

"You quite understand do you not, Lettice?"

"Not quite, Donald," she said.

"When the cur who murdered Gideon Lake is behind prison bars I shall then be ready to take you home with me, as my wife!"

"Oh, sir—Mr. Huddlestone!" gaspingly cried Lettice, struggling from the touch of his hand. "I am so sorry. Did you not know——"

"Know what, pretty?"

"That I am Volney's promised wife?"

"What, that coward?" The lawyer sat bolt upright, his dark face changing color. "I did not know, although she—your cousin—intimated as much. But, good heaven! you will never mate with that man, Lettice. It would be sacrilege. And I'll not permit it."

Several men were advancing through the trees. Lettice, quite white, and trembling

(Continued on page fifteen.)

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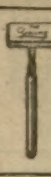

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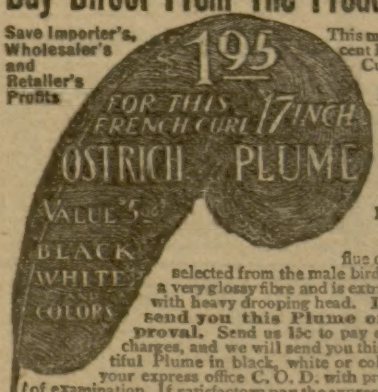

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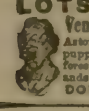
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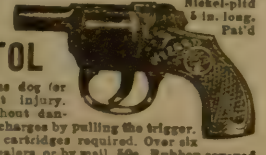
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CHAPTER VIII.

THE CALL OF THE WILD.

FIRST of all the explorer stopped by the fire and tossed several heavy bits of fuel upon the embers, doing this with the air of one who looked upon such an act as second nature.

Perhaps, if Stackpole were watching from under the shade of his hat brim, he might alter his opinion with regard to the novice act, and begin to understand that a fellow need not necessarily be raw to the ways of the woods because he possesses means, and chooses to supply himself with certain comforts that are apt to come in handy—the best of moccasins, a modern quick-firing rifle that carries a small bullet calculated to spread in mushroom shape upon striking the quarry and do the work of a gun of much larger caliber, a sleeping-bag, a compact kerosene stove for the inevitable wet time in camp when the wood will not burn—a veteran is apt to turn up his nose at such innovations, and growl that the simple life suits him as it did his forbears; but, when the rainy spell arrives he is just as willing to cook upon the little stove he derided as the next one; and of a cold night, with the wind howling around like a fiend, give him an opportunity to snuggle down inside that cozy bag which had excited his contempt, and ten to one you will be hardly able to divorce him from it at dawn.

Cuthbert had tried both ways, and, like the sensible chap he was, decided that a man would be a fool to choose the old method with its lack of comfort when able to afford these modern luxuries.

He stalked over to the boats, trailing his gun along, as Owen saw with grim pleasure, for it told him Cuthbert had not changed his mind with regard to the character of their guest, and would undoubtedly keep a close eye on Stackpole while his watch lasted.

The other dropped down beside him, with a few words of greeting.

Owen thought he detected a slight movement of the recumbent form, and believed Stackpole must be awake—he made no effort to sit up and look around, which in itself was somewhat suspicious, for a veteran of his caliber must have so educated his faculties that not a movement, however slight, could take place in a camp where he was sleeping without his knowing it.

The boys sat there and conversed in low tones for quite a long spell; indeed, Cuthbert had to almost drive Owen to the tent, so contented did the Canadian lad seem to be in his company—lonely enough had his life been since the loss of those he held dear, and there was something infinitely precious to him in the cheery radiance of this optimistic Yankee who had crossed his path at a period when he desperately needed a friend.

Cuthbert settled himself down for a good siege when finally he had seen the other crawl into the tent, for he was not to arouse Eli, who slept like a log, until it was after three by his little silver watch.

He had made up his mind that if this pilgrim to whom they had given shelter and food as became generous campers, showed any disposition to pilfer he would treat him in a summary manner, and chase him into the woods, just as any rascal should be made to decamp; and the fact of Stackpole's gigantic figure made not a particle of difference in his calculations.

Whatever the fellow may have planned to attempt during the silent watches of the night, his nerve evidently failed him, for he did not venture to make the least move; possibly the combination of these three determined-looking lads awed him more than he would care to admit, or it might be he had other schemes up his sleeve whereby the same end could be accomplished without taking so much risk—at any rate Cuthbert sat his watch out, and after fixing the fire again, aroused Eli, who in turn sauntered over to the boats, carrying his patron's cherished gun, which he as dearly loved to fondle as a girl might a kitten.

And if Stackpole saw this, as he evidently must under the shelter of that hat brim, he knew it would be a signal for trouble with a big T if he tried any queer business with these widewake lads.

Cuthbert was almost positive he heard him give a disgusted grunt as he settled back for another snooze, and they heard nothing further from him until morning, when he arose, yawning, and stretching his huge bulk, as though he had been dead to the world from the moment he lay down.

They treated him decently and gave him an abundance of breakfast, which the big timber-cruiser gulped down with the eagerness of a hungry wolf; for it had been a long day since he tasted such delicious bacon and coffee, with flap-jacks to "beat the band," as Eli said, made by Owen, who had proved to be superior as a cook to either of his new friends, the gift being a legacy from his mother, he confessed.

Nevertheless, there was an air of restraint about their associations with the woodsman, which he could not but feel, and therefore he made up his bundle soon after, saying that he must be on his way, and while they were engaged in stowing the tent away he took his departure, grunting some sort of thanks for the many favors he had received at their hands.

If what Owen told them of the fellow's nature was actually so, this generosity on the part of the young explorer would not count for a row of pins when occasion arose whereby the temptation came to Stackpole to appropriate some of the expensive outfit his envious eyes had gloated over during his stay with them.

Our friends did not hasten their departure, for they wished to let him have a long lead; for he had left the camp going in a direction that, if persisted in would land him at Fort Harmony in due time.

Owen had not changed his mind since the preceding night, when he asserted so positively that it was his opinion, judging from what he knew of the relations existing between this rover of the mighty woods and the chief factor of the region, Stackpole would hardly turn up at the post, since there had long been bad blood between these men, and the cruiser was too shrewd to put himself in the power of so strenuous an enemy as the grim old Scotch trading master, who ruled affairs in this stretch of country as though he were king.

"I think he only started in that direction to blind us; and that after going a mile or less he will break off the trail and head where he was aiming for last night when he saw our fire, and thought there might be something worth picking up here," said Owen, as he pulled the cords tight around the bag that held the waterproof tent, while the others were doing the same duty for the smaller bags in which food and extra clothes had been thrust.

Cuthbert chuckled as though greatly tickled.

"Well, if that was his hope I'm afraid he was bitterly disappointed in his calculations, that's all. We kept him under cover all right, and perhaps he's mentally kicking himself now over having wasted so many hours peeping out from under that hat brim when he might just as well have been snoozing."

Eli professed to be greatly disappointed, for he remarked dejectedly:

"Thought I might get a chance to try your gun, and I had just made up my mind like which leg I'd pepper if he tried to sneak anything away. Well, p'raps we may run across the critter again, and I'll just keep it in mind that it was the left leg I chose—he's got somewhat of a limp in the right one now, and you see that'd sort of even things up. I don't like to see a lop-sided feller nowadays."

"Yes, I believe you're something of a philanthropist, Eli, always looking out to do somebody good, even if you have to force it into them with a hypodermic syringe or a shotgun. For my part I don't care if we never set eyes on old Stack again, for I fancy the fellow mighty little. There is something about his eyes that goes against my grain, a shifty look that you see in a wolf. He's welcome to all he stowed away, but I hope he doesn't fancy he has a standing invitation to drop in frequently to supper. Just give that rope one more good tug, Eli, and it'll stay for keeps. Now, we're ready to launch the boats and get away, boys."

The sun was just peeping above the horizon, but the air still remained chilly after the long night; to husky boys this amounted to little, and as soon as the camp was abandoned they would soon warm themselves up with paddle exercise, for it was no childish work battling against that swift current.

"Anyhow, it was a mighty comfortable camp," remarked Cuthbert, as they moved away, and his eyes rested fondly upon the scene of their last night's experience; so it ever is with those who love the life in the open, for the unconscious things appeal to their affections, and a staunch boat, a favorite paddle, a gun, knife, belt hatchet, or even the spot where they found comfort and built their shrine at which they temporarily worshiped, the campfire, arouses emotions in their hearts that cannot be fully appreciated by those not of the mystic guild.

Owen led the way in his bullboat.

He was more than usually silent this morning, and Cuthbert wondered what it might be that affected him—could the coming of Stackpole have had anything to do with it—the idea was not impossible, for he had evidently known the gaunt timber-cruiser before, and if the story of the boy's sad past were known the gigantic woodsman might occupy a place in it.

Still, upon reflection, Cuthbert was of the opinion that there must be another reason for his thoughtfulness this morning.

He remembered what hints Owen had let fall concerning the old factor connected with the Hudson Bay post, and that there had been trouble between them; many things gave Cuthbert the opinion that the other had been fleeing from the region at that time they made his acquaintance so strangely, not in terror but rather in anger, and he felt sure strange happenings had been taking place at the post on the day preceding the storm.

If so, then it was the fact that he must evidently soon face the stern factor again that disquieted Owen so; the way in which he tried hard to throw off his morose mood, and answer the sallies of his comrades in a spirit of frolic proved that he was fighting against his nature, and had laid out a course which he was determined to tread no matter what pain or distress it brought in its train.

At any rate, it would soon appear what ailed the lad, and Cuthbert, greatly as he wished to know Owen's story, had too much delicacy to influence him in the telling; he had promised to open his heart to this new and sympathetic chum, and all would come when the spirit moved.

About an hour after leaving camp they suddenly came upon two bullboats that were descending the river swiftly, in each of which a trio of Cree Indians sat or knelt, wielding the paddles after the deft manner of those with whom the art has become second nature.

Cuthbert did not anticipate any trouble from these fellows, who were evidently in the employ of the fur company; but he was keen to notice how they took the presence of the young Canadian in the company of strangers, realizing that they must in all probability know him, and be acquainted with whatever of trouble had hovered around him of late.

Just as he expected they seemed surprised at sight of Owen, and hasty words were passed among them; but they made no motion to interfere with the forward progress of the two boats, and answered the civil salutation of Cuthbert with a series of "how-hows" until the current had swept them past; but it might have been noticed that not once did their shrewd black eyes leave the figure of the young Canadian squatted in his old boat, and sweeping his spruce blade back and forth methodically, as he urged his craft against the stream.

"They know him all right, and are more than surprised to see him with a party of strangers, heading upstream. Now, I wonder if they were sent out to look for a fellow of his description? Gee, but this is a conundrum, all right," whispered Cuthbert to his fellow paddler, at which Eli grinned and nodded assent.

CHAPTER IX.

MAGIC IN THE BERRIES.

The young Canuck guide in the lead did not so much as turn his head after the boats containing the Indians had passed, but continued to dip his paddle in and out with the methodical rhythm so characteristic of the voyageur who has spent his life amid these scenes.

Not so Cuthbert, whose curiosity had been excited in connection with the untutored sons of the wilderness—ever and anon he twisted his head around so that he could secure a survey of the river below; and on such occasions Eli kept his eager eyes on

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the face of his comrade, knowing full well that should there be anything happening he would discover it reflected there.

About the fifth time Cuthbert turned thus he gave vent to a little exclamation, whether of satisfaction or annoyance it would have been difficult to say, and immediately whispered to Eli:

"They're coming all right, just as I expected, old fellow. That proves my idea correct, and that they had been sent out from the post to find what had become of the youngster. He knows they are coming after us just as well as I do, but he's too proud to give them a single look. I like his grit, and between you and me he's going to show us something before long. I'm in a fever to set eyes on that same old Tartar, Alex Gregory. Already I seem to dislike him immensely, and possibly I'll end by hating him good and hard. He's more than a little to blame for Owen's troubles, whatever they may be. Say nothing, Eli, but keep your eyes open."

"What if the copper-skinned critters attack us—I've got my gun handy, and I give you my word there'll be the very old dickens to pay if they start rough-housing it with us," answered the young logger; and it was not in a boastful spirit that he spoke, for Eli usually showed a modest disposition; only he, too, had taken a great fancy to the new chum who had been sent to them by such a freak of fortune, and Cuthbert's intimation that the other must be the victim of oppression rather riled him.

"Oh, I have no idea they will try any funny business; they know we are armed, and besides, they have their orders from the head boss. You'll find that they only mean to tag after us, keeping on our heels until sure we mean to go to the post. These chaps possibly saw that smoke signal the other Cree we met downstream sent up, and they knew Owen was somewhere around. You noticed that they just stared at him all the time, and paid little attention to us. Well, let it go at that; we'll be apt to know shortened by several hours; but it suited all of them to arrive around the sunset hour.

Having an abundance of time they went ashore at high noon, built a fire, and had quite a healthy little lunch, washing it down with a pot of coffee, the delightful aroma of which must have reached the nostrils of the Cree paddlers, who had drawn their boats ashore just below, for the wind lay in that quarter.

Cuthbert expected to hear from those who were playing this comical game of tag, and indeed, he had purposely caused the coffee to boil madly in order that the appetizing scent might be wafted with the breeze; consequently when Eli declared one of the Indians was advancing toward the fire, the explorer grinned as though he might be patting himself on the back over having accomplished a rather pretty piece of strategy.

The fellow came directly up to where they sat finishing their meal.

Cuthbert did not altogether like his looks, but then he realized that he was hardly capable of judging a good Indian from a bad one, since he had only a limited experience with the natives—what appeared to be a scowling phiz to him might seem only the natural expression to be found upon the dusky faces of these Saskatchewan dwellers of the woods, when viewed by Owen.

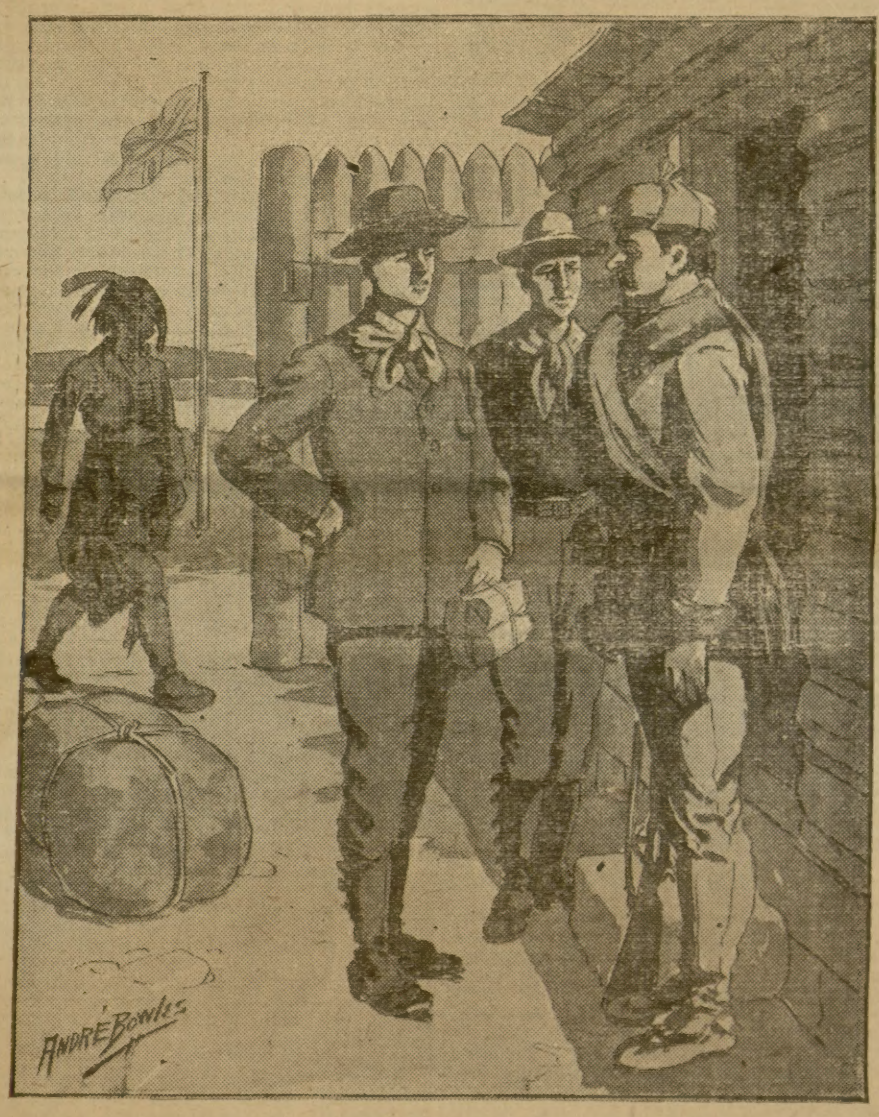
As he drew near the Indian made certain mysterious motions with his hands, which Cuthbert understood must be the peace signs, and he began to imitate the other, not wishing to be outdone in politeness.

"How," said the copper-colored intruder, with a rising reflection.

"How," repeated Cuthbert, in just the same tone of voice.

"You camp boss?" pursued Mr. Lo, keenly eyeing the young fellow, as though he might be dubious concerning this fact.

"Well, perhaps you might call me that, seeing this is my outfit; but just say that I'm an Easy Boss, and let it go at that.



"Is the factor—Mr. Gregory—in?"

a heap more than we do now when another day comes along. One thing I'll wager a lot on, and that is he's worth sticking to through thick and thin, eh, Eli?" ventured the explorer, earnestly.

"You bet!" was the laconic but expressive answer he received, and Cuthbert, who knew the logger so well, understood all that was implied.

Eli also glanced back just before they turned a bend, and as there was quite a little open stretch of clear water back of them ere the stream twisted its way around a big bunch of birch trees that stood like sentinels on a projecting knoll, he was able to see the two bullboats come around the curve, and follow grimly in their wake, the occupants evidently making no effort at speed, for had they chosen they could have given our youngsters a warm proposition in the way of a race, their muscles being inured to the monotonous labor of the paddle.

Cuthbert began asking questions of Owen, who allowed the other boat to gain a position alongside, so that conversation might be the more easily carried on.

Thus he learned that, proceeding leisurely they would readily make the Hudson Bay post ere nightfall; had there been any reason for haste this time might have been

Now, what can I do for you?" remarked the explorer, who was as yet unknown to fame, but who had aspirations.

"Huh, you got um coffee—we smell um good—can stand no more—s'pose you give Injun drink, him be glad, much so—no have coffee many moons—set um up in other alley—how?" was what followed, much to the amusement of both Cuthbert and Eli, for evidently the fellow had seen a bowling alley in Winnipeg, or some other city.

"Well, I like your nerve, my copper-colored friend, which I see you carry with you all the time; but after all I don't know that I can blame you asking, for the smell of good coffee is enough to set any chap wild. What is your name, may I humbly inquire?" ventured Cuthbert, keeping a very straight face, though he could hear Eli chuckling, and wanted to laugh outright himself; for it was evident that while music is said to have "power to soothe the savage beast," the aroma of the subtle coffee bean in the process of cooking seemed capable of subjugating the savage man himself, and bringing him to "eat humble pie," as Eli put it.

"Name all same Springing Elk—son of Chief Wolf-killer, him same head of Crees on big river Saskatch. You say we have coffee—ugh, much good, and we not forget,"

and not waiting to receive additional assurance he raised his hand to his mouth and gave vent to a series of sharp barks or yelps that must have been an eagerly awaited signal conveying good news to his mates, for immediately the whole bunch started for the campfire of the three boys.

Cuthbert, in an aside, asked Owen if they need fear any danger from the Crees; but the young Canuck shook his head in the negative, answering back:

"Not at all. The only failing they have is a weakness for appropriating anything that strikes their fancy, when they think no one is looking, and I think we can avoid that by being on guard all the time until we embark again. They are crazy about coffee, and would go to great trouble to get a drink of the stuff."

Nevertheless, Eli, though hearing what was said, did not feel disposed to take any great stock in the pacific intentions of the heathen; he had read stories of their treacherous nature, and heard men speak so derisively about the "only good Indian being a dead Indian," that he felt it his bounden duty to maintain a watchful eye upon the sextette while they were present, all the while keeping his gun in his clasp, ready to meet any emergency that might arise.

But then Eli had led a hard life, and there was considerable excuse for his suspicious nature—we are often creatures of circumstances and environment, and his school had been the rough logging camps, where the worst that is in men usually crops out.

Cuthbert busied himself in making a new pot of coffee, an operation which the group of bucks watched with glistening eyes; and when a little later the steam began to pour out from the nozzle of the pot, and the aroma struck their olfactory nerves, really, several of them could not stand it, but had to walk away, those more masterful standing on one foot and snuffing the air, while their expressions of anticipation would have done credit to so many children.

They each had two big tin cups of the decoction, steaming hot, and undefiled by either sugar or condensed milk, showing that they possessed the proper taste for the beverage of the gods, according to the ideas of those who grow the royal berry, and know how it should be drunk.

Cuthbert had accommodated the untutored sons of the forest partly because he had a warm heart, and again with the half-formed idea that possibly his little party might benefit from the act in the future—frequently the old saying of "bread cast upon the waters returning after some days" comes true.

Still, there was a limit to his indulgence; and he certainly did not intend to allow this thirsty crowd of skin-hunters to become regulation camp-followers; his supply of coffee would not long stand the strain, even if his patience did.

So as soon as the last cups were drained of every drop of the delicious fluid the boys captured the same, deposited them in the receptacle where they belonged, thrust this into the cedar canoe, and then Cuthbert, as master of ceremonies, cried out:

"Yo-ho, all aboard for the post!"

In another minute the canoes of the expedition began to cleave the waters, headed upstream.

The Indians also tumbled into their boats, nor were they longer satisfied to hang back one or more hundred yards as formerly—that elixir had quite captured their hearts, and they scrambled to keep in close proximity to the magical "floating coffin," as they denominated the cedar canoe, as if they could scent future feasts along the line of that which they had just enjoyed.

Cuthbert laughed over the situation more than a few times, and declared that he need fear no evil from the copper-faced denizens of the timber country so long as a shot remained in their locker—a grain of Java in their caddy.

They paddled leisurely, with Owen leading the way as before; for being familiar with the region he would know how to time matters so that they should reach the vicinity of the post at dusk.

As the afternoon waned Cuthbert could see that the other was struggling with some strong emotion, and he understood that it

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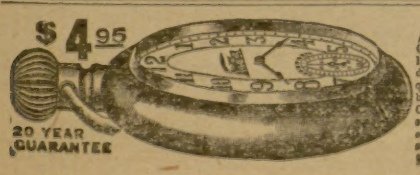

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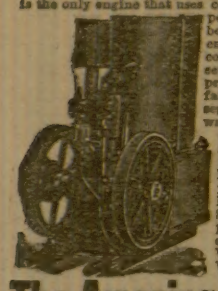

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must be connected with the return trip he was making to the post, which he had evidently abandoned for good, at the time of his hasty run down the river.

He fancied that Owen might take occasion to give them some inkling as to how matters stood with him here, for he had promised to reveal the secret of his lonely life at the first favorable opportunity; but somehow he did not appear to be in the humor just then, being wrapped up in his own gloomy reflections.

Well, it could not long be delayed now, and Cuthbert, being built along the lines of a patient and philosophical lad, felt that he could wait.

CHAPTER X.
WITH AUTHORITY.

Several times during the late afternoon they had heard gunshots ahead, and from this, judged that they were drawing very near the post; which, like all such important places belonging to the great fur company, must present quite an animated appearance with trappers and hunters, whites, Indians and halfbreeds, coming and going.

Few went downstream, since the points of interest and profit were further up in the wilderness; which accounted for the fact of their having seen only a couple of boats during the whole afternoon, one of these being manned by some voyageurs belonging to the post, for they wore picturesque uniforms, consisting of leather coats lined with flannel, belts of scarlet worsted, breeches of smoked buckskin, and moose moccasins, and carried shawls of Scotch plaid, as well as fur caps with ear-flaps for the cold weather that was liable to visit the Northwest country at any day now—at the bow of the large boat floated the well-known blue and white flag of the Hudson Bay Company, showing that this craft had undoubtedly carried a load of supplies to the post, and was now taking back to civilization packages of belated furs that had been brought in by trappers from the Arctic regions.

Cuthbert knew considerable about this vast concern which has had almost a monopoly of the fur-gathering business in America for two centuries—really it dates back to 1670, when a license to trade in furs in the Hudson Bay region was granted to an English company.

Knowing that he would be likely to come in contact with the agents of this corporation during his travels in the Saskatchewan country, Cuthbert had taken pains to learn all he could about what history had to say of their doings; and he found that in the far past they had been merciless and unscrupulous in their dealings with their employers; though, of course, much of this high-handed style of conducting business is not tolerated nowadays.

The shadows were beginning to gather as the canoes rounded a bend in the stream, and the post stood out before them in the clearing, with the last glow in the western sky as a background.

The Union Jack had been hauled down with the setting of the sun, for at these posts along the distant border something of military discipline has to be maintained, lest those in charge find their rough wards and employes breaking loose from their authority; for they have to deal with reckless spirits at times, and, of course, liquor frequently brings about trouble, just as in logging camps and all similar places.

Their coming had undoubtedly been signaled long before they arrived within hailing distance of the fort, for there was quite a crowd down at the landing to see them come in, a mixture of whites, natives and breeds, all of them no doubt connected in some manner with the great fur company.

Some of these gave the six Indians a noisy greeting, after the custom of their kind, boisterous but good-natured; but Cuthbert noticed that not one had a word to say to his little party; which pleased him very much, since he had worried over what they should do if the crowd proved unruly.

He understood from what Owen had let fall that the old factor ruled his camp with a rod of iron, and that there was not a man who dared go against his expressed wish—doubtless he had given his followers to understand that they were to keep aloof, and let him do the honors of the occasion.

So our young friends shoved their boats upon the shelving beach, sprang out, and pulled the canoes up far enough to keep them safe from the current of the river; Owen had already told them that a code of honor existed at the post, and whatever they left in the boat would be perfectly safe, for should so much as a trap be stolen, the vigilant factor would visit the thief with punishment of a drastic nature—his Scotch blood would not stand for such a breach of hospitality.

They knew that it was their duty to seek an audience with the commander of the post immediately, explain their mission to these wilds, and, if it could be done in a diplomatic manner, ingratiate themselves in his favor by making him some sort of a present—Owen had hinted that the factor's one weakness was a love for tea, which he used at every meal with quite as much pleasure as the veriest old maid gossip at a sewing circle; and as luck would have it this happened to coincide with a leaning of his own, for he had made sure to fetch considerable of the very finest that money could purchase in New York—Ceylon, Young Hyson and Orange Pekoe.

Hence, when he told Eli that it was up to them to make a bee-line for the headquarters of the factor, and announce their arrival, his first act was to gather up a package he had prepared, consisting of a pound each of the several kinds of tea carried by the expedition.

Thus armed and equipped he sallied forth, under the belief that he was able to propitiate the powers that be, without a single carnal weapon, and loaded only with a gentle persuader.

Owen had pointed out the position of the lodge where the factor had his office as well as his habitation; and indeed, even had they not a friend at court it would have been easy to determine the location of this, since it turned out to be the largest building within the stockade, and in front of which arose the tall pole that had evidently held the Union Jack up to sunset.

No one followed them, but various were the curious glances cast in that direction by the many personages who had a connection with the busy post.

At the door stood a man, who appeared to be a guard, for he carried a rifle, and stirred at their approach, as though it might be his business to make inquiries of those who asked for an audience with the "little czar" within.

"Is the factor, Mr. Gregory, in?" asked Cuthbert, pleasantly.

"He is—walk right inside," came the reply, and they obeyed.

The office of the trading post was a sight to Cuthbert, who had often read of such a place, but never as yet, set eyes on one; a thousand articles seemed to be crowded into the apartment, so that there was little spare room on either side of the passage leading stright up to the great desk, where the factor held his court, flanked by account books that doubtless would have been rich reading to any one interested in figures connected with the prices paid the Indians for furs.

Through a door Cuthbert could see an adjoining room that was evidently used for a general audience chamber in the wintry season, perhaps a bunkroom also, for it had an enormous stove that was well calculated to warm things when started.

Only a cursory glance did he bestow upon these inanimate things, for his attention was immediately wrapped up in the lone figure sitting back of the big desk, the factor of the whole region, Alexander Gregory, the mysterious man whose past seemed to be connected in some way with that of their new Canadian chum, Owen Dugdale.

Cuthbert rather prided himself on his ability to read faces, and it was in this spirit that he approached the Scotch resident boss.

He saw a bearded face, with the sandy hue thickly sprinkled with gray—a face marked with strong individuality, and passions such as were common in the days of the Bruce and the Wallace of whom we read; indeed, just such a sturdy character as he had expected to discover in this strange man of the Northwest, judging from all the stories he had heard.

And yet he quickly discerned a bit of a twinkle in the corners of those cold gray eyes that told Cuthbert the other was not wholly a man of iron—there was another vein to his character not often seen by his fellows, but which could be played upon by touching the right cord, if one but knew what that was.

In that one moment of time Cuthbert knew that here was a man worthy of his best efforts in the line of study, and that perhaps before he quitted this far-away post on the frontier he would be able to see the strong elements constituting Alexander Gregory's makeup unmasked.

Cuthbert was something of a diplomat, and he knew just how best to address a man of authority whom he desired to placate; accordingly he gave his name as well as that of his companion, told of the folly that had brought him to the wilderness, and that he desired to see a genuine trading-post of the great company, now that he found himself in the neighborhood, and that he was pleased to meet the factor, of whom he had heard so many things in connection with the building up of the company's trade.

Alexander Gregory listened, and it might be noticed that his face seemed to relax a trifle of its grim aspect; when the precious packets of tea were placed before him on the desk he could not refrain from smiling, and thrusting forth his hand, with words of warm welcome that quite tickled the young diplomat, for he knew that he had won a point in the game.

CHAPTER XI.
SCENTS A MYSTERY.

Alexander Gregory was a Scotchman, but he had spent most of his life in the Canadian bush, and while there was a distinct "burr" in his manner of speech, he very seldom used any of that broad dialect so characteristic of his race; and then generally when much excited.

He seemed particularly amused at the harum-scarum idea that had tempted our young explorer to these distant fields, for few men knew more about the fearful difficulties awaiting the venturesome nomad in those lonely wastes beyond than did the veteran factor; since many a time and oft he had roamed toward the Arctic circle in search of new opportunities, and had the humor seized him he could have told thrilling stories of what he had seen and endured there.

Seldom did he have the chance to interview so fresh and interesting a character as Cuthbert, for his work brought him into daily contact with only rough, strenuous men, and in time this had undoubtedly hardened his own nature more or less.

He asked many questions, and examined the lad's charts with interest.

Just as Owen had done he condemned the map made by the halfbreed, Dubois, and declared that the fellow had undoubtedly purposely deceived him, with some object in view that could only be guessed.

"That's just what Owen said," exclaimed Cuthbert, without stopping to think; and no sooner had the impulsive words passed his lips than he remembered that this was supposed to be a tabooed name in the hearing of the old factor, though just why he had no means of understanding.

Involuntarily he looked up hastily as if to see what effect the mention of Owen's name had on his host; but he only discovered a slight start, followed by a flitting frown, and then a grim smile.

"Oh, he did, eh?" he remarked, quietly; "well, it would seem that the fellow has some sense about him, which I had begun to doubt; after he refused to meet me halfway in burying the bitterness of the past. But speaking of this Dubois, he is a rascal beyond any doubt, and since he appears to have entered into some sort of partnership with Stackpole, a fellow of his own stripe, though hardly as bold in his way of doing things, I'm of the opinion there was a game afoot to force money out of you somehow. These scoundrels have been playing fast and loose for a long time in this region, but the worst they've been guilty of up to the present has been the robbery of traps. Still, they have the spirit in them to attempt almost any unlawful game, once the opportunity offers, and I suppose they thought it had appeared in you. I've about made up my mind that the time has come to drive them out of the region, or hand them over to the Mounted Police, who will see to it that they are put in gaol. In this region we often have to take the law in our own hands, you understand, lad. Aye, I've seen some desperate things done in my day, and more often than I like they come up before my mind in the still watches of the night. Mine has been a rough life of it, taken altogether, and not an enviable one. It is anything but a paradise up here when the long winter settles down. But it is the only life I know, and has its charms to a man of my nature, though there be times when I have longings for civilization and all that it carries with it."

The factor sighed as he spoke in this meditative way, and Cuthbert could read between the lines, knowing what a wasted life it must seem to look back upon, with the monotony broken only by scenes of violence, when Indians went upon the warpath, or halfbreeds became rebellious, as during the great uprising along the Saskatchewan, when the ugly front of war made this region its battleground.

Eli was awed by the frown of the factor, and hardly spoke a word unless addressed in person; but he, too, felt considerable curiosity concerning the relation of Owen to this grim personage, and spent much time in propounding questions to himself with the object of finding out the truth.

On the whole Cuthbert was impressed rather favorably.

He believed that Mr. Gregory, while appearing to be a forbidding character, was less of an ogre than surface marks would indicate; indeed, Cuthbert rather took a fancy to the old chap, and could, in a measure, realize how he must have yearned for the pleasures of that outer life from which his fate barred him.

He made up his mind to question Owen at the first opportunity, and learn what it was that stood between this czar of the wilderness and himself, for the mystery not only piqued his imagination, but he began to feel that his new-found friend might, in some way, be managing his case unwisely, and that the advice of a sympathetic comrade would prove of value in the matter.

You see, Cuthbert was a bit shrewd, and already suspected something of the truth; for he could see through a mill-stone that had a hole in the center; and it had flashed upon him suddenly that there was more than an accidental resemblance between the young Canadian lad and this stern master of the post.

Now, it chanced that the American, while devoted to his chosen profession of wandering through countries where the foot of a white man had never before trod, had other traits of character, and like most fellows, liked to dabble in a bit of a mystery, especially when he thought he could see a chance to improve the conditions surrounding a friend of his; and accordingly he puckered up his lips as though about to whistle, though no sound escaped him, and inwardly he was saying something after the nature of this:

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"By George, I believe I have it now—this old martinet, who rules the whole country of the Saskatchewan with a rod of iron, and Owen are related somehow or other, and in the past there must have been trouble between the two branches of the family—the Scotch are famous for such things, and can hate just as hard as they can love. Here's a pretty kettle of fish. Owen's being knocked out of something that is his by rights; and I'm going to turn my talents to account so as to see that he gets all that's coming to him. What relation could Aleck bear a youngster like Owen but that of grandpa, eh? Why, it promises to be about as good as a play. But I mustn't let on that I've guessed the riddle, for I don't understand why they're at daggers points—what has Owen done—why did he skip down the river without even his gun? H'm, there's lots to unravel here, and perhaps I'd better get Chum Owen to confide in me before I go any further."

The factor was plainly eager to test the virtues of his new tea, for he put a kettle of cold water on the stove, thereby proving that he was an adept at the art of brewing the fragrant herb, since it requires fresh water, brought to a boil, and not stale stuff, to extract the delightful aroma and flavor.

Cuthbert took the hint, though Mr. Gregory asked the lads to stay and drink a cup with him, a common enough invitation across the big pond, though altogether unknown among Americans, whose invitations are apt to include something stronger.

When they declined he bade them consider themselves asked to dine with him later on that evening; but Cuthbert saw an opportunity to put in an entering wedge, and reluctantly said that they would have to decline, since they had a comrade, and would not feel like leaving him alone.

The factor opened his mouth as if to say something, and Cuthbert expected that he meant to include Owen in his invitation; but he simply nodded his head, smiled whimsically, and bent over to look at the fire.

So they passed out.

Eli was completely muddled up with regard to the state of things, for he had not the shrewdness of his companion, and as yet saw no reason to suspect that there was a relationship between those who were so antagonistic.

He meant to make friends with some of the halfbreeds who lounged about the post, and by asking questions anticipated getting close to the truth; perhaps his way, while less elevated than the plan of Cuthbert, might bring results in a more speedy manner.

They found Owen where he had promised to await them, which was in a corner of the stockade, just outside the main enclosure—a rather secluded place, which the other evidently knew quite well.

He had the tent up, and was arranging things for comfort, just as though unaware how long their stay might be.

Owen asked no questions, but he looked curiously into Cuthbert's face, as if he might discover something there; but the other had decided to wait for a more fitting opportunity ere springing the question he had in mind.

Some of the loungers gathered around.

They were naturally curious concerning the outfit of the young explorer, for he carried things such as they had never in all their lives seen; some of these were apt to excite the ridicule of such old and rough campaigners, accustomed to looking upon the earth as their bed, and the canopy of Heaven as their roof; but when in lieu of a cooking fire Cuthbert set up his little "Jewel" kerosene stove, and in less than ten minutes had water boiling furiously, when he could make a big pot of coffee, the remarks in French patois were almost wholly favorable to the little brass contraption, as both the Americans knew; for these fellows recognized how handy such an affair must prove on a wet day when it was almost impossible to find dry wood to burn, and some warm drink was needed to tone up the system.

But it was ludicrous when the coffee began to boil to see those chaps elevate their noses and begin to sniff the fragrance as only wretched beings may who have long been strangers to the delicious decoction.

Evidently they had been told by the three Indians how the boys had treated them to a cup of the beverage, and they made bold to hover about in the hope that history would repeat itself.

Nor were they disappointed.

Cuthbert was too shrewd a general to miss so good an opportunity to make many friends out of these rough spirits; so, after the campers had enjoyed their cup apiece, and eaten some supper, Cuthbert deliberately filled the aluminum receptacle, added condensed milk, with sugar, and then gravely presented it to the fellow whom he judged was the boss of the outfit, a big, raw-boned French-Canadian voyageur, with a beard like a pirate.

His eyes almost danced with delight, and he allowed the aromatic compound to gurgle down his capacious throat slowly, while he held back his head to gaze upward toward the first stars that had appeared in the blue arch overhead.

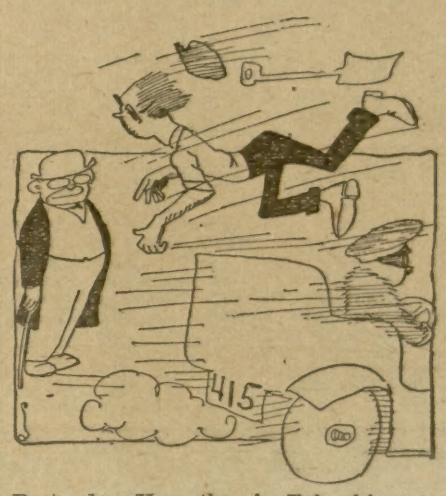
Twice he stopped and looked at his companions with a smirk, unable to refrain from tantalizing them; and it was ludicrous to see the way in which they scowled and shook their heads ominously—had it been any one but this strapping leader he might have found himself in trouble very soon.

However, in good time they one and all had a chance to taste and enjoy the results of Cuthbert's brewing; and he realized that his act had been a masterstroke so far as making friends of the gathering was concerned—the insidious coffee bean had proven more mighty than an army in changing the current of their thoughts.

And yet Cuthbert, who saw everything, could not help but notice that not one of these men of the post said anything to Owen, though all of them, from time to time, cast curious glances his way, as though he might be a puzzle they could not solve.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this story of strange and wild boyhood ventures. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

Careless.



Bystander—Hey, there! Take his number!

Victim—Sure, I wud; but I haven't no screw-driver.

Every Lady Read This.

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The Mysterious Cousin.

(Continued from page eleven.)

like an aspen, leaned heavily against the tree.

The pompous little man advanced quickly upon Huddlestone while Volney and a companion stood back waiting.

"Donald Huddlestone, I believe?" said the man. The lawyer nodded.

"Very good, I have a warrant for you. I trust you will come peaceably, since I am prepared to enforce the mandate of the court."

The continuation of this highly interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. It leads to very strange and fascinating situations. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

Man-Eaters.

Modern science is too much for the tigers of India. For the last few years these animals have been so destructive to human life and to domestic cattle, that people living in exposed villages have been terrible sufferers. Hunting tigers is a royal sport and one in which the officers of the English army stationed in the East very generally indulge, but the few thus disposed of are not sufficient to keep down the number of these dangerous and savage creatures. A premium is given by the Government for every one destroyed, so that the natives make a business of killing them. But the hazard of the occupation prevents its being very generally participated in, the hunters frequently losing their lives.

The destruction of a single tiger often becomes of great importance to a village or neighborhood. Various are the expedients adopted to destroy them. Bow-traps are set to discharge arrows into them on their approach, heavy beams are suspended so as to fall upon and crush them when they touch the trap. Large boxes, strong enough to hold them, are baited with kids' meat, and the game once having entered the trap hole is secured.

The old mode of a looking-glass which attracts the tiger is also still common in India. Attracted by his own image, the animal enters the trap and is caught. A curious mode is also practiced of scattering broad leaves, smeared with a sticky substance like bird-lime, in the tiger's path, and if he sets foot upon a smeared leaf, his fate may be regarded as sealed. He rubs his paws on his face to get rid of the leaf, and the case becomes worse, the leaves being transferred to his face, more are added by his efforts until he is blinded by them.

While he rolls upon the ground in his rage and blindness, he becomes an easy prey to the hunter who is attracted to the spot by his roaring. But so prolific are these animals in India that they have of late years baffled all these attempts to exterminate them, until an English surgeon entered the field on a regular crusade against the pest. He has fed the man-eaters with good fresh meat, but with a slight decoction of strychnine added. Traps are no longer necessary, nor powder and ball. The tigers and leopards partake freely of the liberal supply of kids' meat found near their haunts, and strewn generally about the forest, and almost immediately lie down and die beside what is left of their meal.

One Question Too Many.

It was in a personal injury suit against a street railway corporation that I demonstrated for myself to a most convincing, yet disconcerting, degree the deadly pitfalls of extensive cross-examination, says Mrs. Antoinette Funk, attorney.

My client had been injured in getting off a street car. One of the defendant company's witnesses testified that the plaintiff, witnout giving the conductor a signal to stop, had deliberately stepped from the car while it was in motion—the deduction being of course, that my client had only himself to blame.

Taking the witness in hand, I asked: "At what time of day did the accident occur, Mr. O'Reilly?"

"About sivin o'clock in the evenin', ma'am."

"Had you been drinking during the day, Mr. O'Reilly?"

"Yis, ma'am, I had some dhrinks."

"How many drinks did you have that day, Mr. O'Reilly?"

"Indeed, ma'am, I can't very well remember how many."

"You cannot remember? Come, now, Mr. O'Reilly, can you not even tell the jury how many drinks you had that day from noon to the time of the accident?"

"Well, ma'am, I think I can tell them about how many."

"About how many, then, did you have that day since noon?"

"It was a sulthry kind of day, ma'am," replied the witness, apologetically, as it seemed; "I had about eight."

With satisfaction I noticed the look of aroused interest in the faces of the intelligent jurymen, and recognized that in their minds the props under O'Reilly testimony were weak and trembling. While feeling secretly grateful to the hostile witness for his honest candor, and hating on that account to hurt his feelings, I felt that my duty to my client demanded that I put the elucidating and evidence-crushing query:

"So, you had eight drinks that afternoon, Mr. O'Reilly; now, will you tell the jury were those drinks beer or whisky?"

He looked at me in surprise and reproach, and answered:

"They were nayther, ma'am—they were water."

"You see," he explained, as he vacated the witness chair, "since the hard times kem on and the prices of everything wint up, I became a total abstainer."

So, in the zeal of perilous cross-examination, did I inadvertently fire a shot that told for the enemy.

What Troubled Him.

The impecunious poet had long worshiped the editor's daughter, and now, oh, joy! his dream of bliss had come true. For she had said that she would be his, with a capital H.

Still, in the first throes of his rapture he seemed strangely ill at ease. She was quick to notice it, and a shadow chased the sunshine from her fair face.

"Are you not happy?" she whispered.

"Ye-es," he faltered.

"But something troubles you," she insisted. "What is it, darling?"

"Nun-nothing, dearest," he stammered.

"Tell me," she demanded. "There should be no secrets between us now that you have been accepted."

"Does your—does your father pay on acceptance or—er—publication?" faltered the impecunious poet.

The glad light died from the eyes of the editor's daughter, and for the rest of the evening they talked about the weather.

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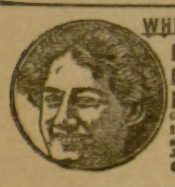

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Mrs. J. Kay, Room Z, 161 W. Madison St., Chicago, Ill., will send absolutely free prescription for her inexpensive and harmless Tobacco cure, which has cured thousands of the tobacco habit. Any druggist can put it up.

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Our American made, stem wind watch with beautifully designed case, factory-tested, guaranteed for 5 years, and exquisite ring set with a brilliant stone are given to boys and girls for selling 20 packets of high grade art post cards at 10c a packet. Order 20 packets to-day. When sold, send us $2.00 and we will positively send you at once the watch, ring and chain.
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A painless home remedy for the Opium, Morphine or Laudanum habit. Free trial sent on application.
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Sold everywhere or sent postpaid on receipt of price, 25 cents, 50 cents and $1.00 per box. Sample sent free on request.
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25 CHRISTMAS CARDS 10c

The above illustrations are taken from our line of beautiful Holiday Cards, lithographed in colors from new and original designs. Twenty-five of these beautiful cards, No. 1 quality, mailed for only 10 cents. Twenty artistic cards, No. 2 quality, still more beautiful with rich gold or silver background, extremely handsome, postpaid, for 10 cents. Fifteen extra quality Christmas Cards, No. 3 quality, in many colors and gold and silver. Richly embossed on extra fine quality of card board, sure to please you, 10 cents. Ten magnificent Christmas Cards, No. 4 quality, all different in rich colors and gold wave finish. Embossed and absolutely the very choicest cards we make. Easily worth 25 cents. Our price only 10 cents. Address JAS. LEE,
Dept. 350, Clinton Street, Chicago.

BEWARE.

Wonderful whispers now float to my ear,
"Santa is coming, for Christmas is here."
Dear Santa, whose hands drop great sugar-plums,
Whistles and wagons, and dollies and drums.

But a funny old fellow is Santa, I've found,
For he hates boys and girls that go prying around,
So if for a plumply filled stocking you care,
Of watching and prying on Santa beware!

All About a Cow.

Friend Jones bought a cow because he was so fond of animals. And then he had to go and live in the country, because the city is no place for cows. And after he was comfortably settled in the country he thought he ought to adopt a couple of orphans to help him enjoy the green fields, and then he had to get some nurses to take care of the orphans, all on account of the cow. Now these children were named Bob and Betty, and they were most engaging children, and raughty most of the time.

The only one trouble in all this blissful paradise was that the children sometimes used to annoy the cow; not on purpose, of course, but sometimes just because they wanted to be kind. They would make it a necklace of buttercups, for instance, and the cow would eat the buttercups to get it off, and the buttercups would taste bitter, and then she would make faces. And one time they tied Betty's roman sash around her neck in a big bow to make her look pretty, and it came untied, and she tripped over it at every other step, and it made her cross. So, to soothe her, Bob gave her his straw hat to eat, and it had some kind of varnish on, so the cow made worse faces than before. And Betty and Bob's nurses were not pleased.

At last one day Betty and Bob got a stepladder, and mounting on it tried to ride the cow. This was more than the meekest of cows could stand. She snorted with indignation, and kicked up her heels ran off down the road and out of sight.

When Friend Jones returned home and found the cow gone he was much upset.

"Alas," he cried, "it was for the sake of the cow that I moved into the country. If the cow is gone, there's no sense in staying here, and I'd better go back to the city at once. And the only reason I adopted you two children was to help me enjoy the green fields, and if there won't be any green fields there won't be any sense in keeping you. And if I don't keep you, there's no sense in having the nurses. I'm afraid we'll all have to pack up our things and go back to the city on the afternoon train. I'm so sorry that cow ran away!"

Bob and Betty felt solemn indeed, and while the nurses were packing their trunks they took hold of hands and went down the road. "We must find that cow," they said.

And they did find her, about half a mile down the road, eating grass. She looked at them suspiciously when they came up, but allowed herself to be led home, where Friend Jones welcomed her with tears of joy.

"My dear children," he cried, "now that the cow is found we can stay in the country forever!"

And after that the children were exceedingly careful about the way they were polite to that cow, and she never ran away again.

Origin of Yule-Tide.

Once upon a time, when Christmas was yet unknown, the Northern nation of the world held a yearly festival which they called Yule. They wreathed with green the temples of their heathen gods, as we wreathe our churches today; they burned great Yule logs in honor of the sun, that he might make the earth blossom into spring; and they gave their children Yule gifts from fir trees loaded down with pretty things, just as we bestow gifts upon our children upon Christmas Eve.

It was not until 180 years after Christ, in the reign of the Roman Emperor Commodus, that Yule became Christmas. It was in the fourth century, at the time of Constantine the Great and of Diocletian, that there lived Saint Nicholas, whom boys and girls know everywhere as Santa Claus. The legend of the jolly old fellow traveling with his reindeer to fill the stockings, which children placed ready for him, grew from the fact that St. Nicholas was regarded as the patron saint of young people the world over. From early youth the youngsters learn to adore Santa Claus, whose generosity is illimitable, whose gifts are innumerable. But while our esteem is expressed for Santa Claus, we must recall the history of the Christmas holidays; for what is more beautiful than that the living religion of Christ should recall and vivify one of the oldest of the heathen festivals, not only taking away nothing that it was good to retain, but hallowing one particular day, Dec. 25, as the birthday of the child Jesus?

A HIGHWAYMAN.

The Kid—I'm sorry, Santa, but I ain't takin' no chances in gettin' nuthin' but a ten-cent toy dis year. Drop dat bag.

Toasts for Christmas.

Here's to us that are here, to you that are there, and the rest of us everywhere.

The good die young—here's hoping that you may live to a ripe old age.

May we have those in our arms that we love in our hearts.

Here's a toast to the host who carved the roast;

And a toast to the hostess—may she never "roast" us.

Here's to a kiss:
Give me a kiss, and to that kiss add a score,
Then to that twenty add a hundred more;
A thousand to that hundred, and so kiss on,
To make that thousand quite a million,
Treble that million, and when that is done
Let's kiss afresh as though we'd just begun.

To Our National Birds—the Eagle and the Turkey—(while the host is carving):
May one give us peace in all our States,
And the other a piece for all our plates.

Here's to love, the only fire against which there is no insurance.
Here's to those that I love;
Here's to those who love me;
Here's to those who love those that I love,
Here's to those who love those who love me.
Here's to the happiest hours of my life—
Spent in the arms of another man's wife:
My mother!

LET'S BE TROLLEYS!

If only boys were trolley cars,
How splendid it would be!
No one expects them to "keep still,"
For trolleys, don't you see,
Must clang and rush and clang all day
To do their full dutee!

A Physician Cures His Wife of Consumption

It Costs You Nothing to Try the Same Treatment.

"GENTLEMEN:
"My wife was down with Consumption when I ordered a bottle of Aicsol (Lloyd). She was very weak from night sweats, cough and in a feverish condition. I noticed a change for the better after ten days' treatment and from that time on up to three months when the cure was completed. Aicsol (Lloyd) kills the Tubercle Bacillus in the blood and tissue and it is the only remedy so far discovered that will do this. It is a preventative as well as a cure. It should be used by those who are run down or those who fear the approach of Consumption. It can be truthfully said that Aicsol (Lloyd) for the cure and prevention of Consumption is the most wonderful compound of the present age.
"DR. W. H. KNIGHT, Swampscott Mass."

This is only one of hundreds of similar letters from leading physicians and grateful patients that we have received and have on file in our office.

So sure are we that Aicsol (Lloyd) is a successful treatment for Consumption and Chronic Bronchitis, and that you will feel its beneficial effects inside of fifteen days, that we will gladly send a full month's treatment to any sufferer who will send us their name and address.

We make no conditions except that you take the treatment for fifteen days, according to directions. Should the results be such as to make you absolutely sure that a continuance of Aicsol (Lloyd) will cure you, you are to remit us $5.00 for same and continue the treatment until it is all used. If, after taking the treatment for fifteen days, you are not satisfied with the results, you are to return the unused portion of the treatment to us and no charge will be made for that which you have used.

Judd Q. Lloyd, the eminent scientist who discovered this wonderful preparation, was on December 15, 1908, awarded a diploma of merit by the London Society of Science, Letters and Art, in recognition of his valuable services to mankind in discovering Aicsol (Lloyd), the only known successful treatment for consumption. The society was established in 1881, for the purpose of meriting the one greatest achievement in scientific discoveries each year, in each country.

Aicsol (Lloyd) is a perfectly palatable preparation. You take absolutely no risk whatever, for Aicsol (Lloyd) must be entirely satisfactory to you before you pay us one cent. The burden of the proof is entirely on us. What Aicsol (Lloyd) has done for others it should do for you. Send your name and address today, state nearest express office and we will send you a full month's treatment for trial with full directions. Restorall Chemical Co., 571 Lloyd Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

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ALL FOUR RINGS given to anyone who sells 12 pieces of jewelry at 10c each and when sold sends us the money $1.20. Send back any not sold. We trust you.
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Why despair, if others have failed; send at once for a treatise and Free Bottle of my infallible remedy. I have made the disease of Fits, Epilepsy or Falling Sickness a life-long study, and warrant my remedy to give immediate and successful relief. I have hundreds of testimonials from those who have been cured. Give express and P. O. address.
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